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AN OUTLINE OF  
EUROPEAN HISTORY

EDITED BY

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PART I: 1046-1494  
THE MIDDLE AGES

*An Outline of*  
EUROPEAN HISTORY

PART I: 1046-1494

THE MIDDLE AGES

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PART II: 1494-1714

THE SIXTEENTH & SEVENTEENTH CENTUR

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PART III: 1714-1815

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY & THE  
REVOLUTION

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PART IV: 1815-1918

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY & THE  
WORLD WAR

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## CHAPTER I

### EUROPE IN 1715

A TRAVELLER from to-day who made a journey through Europe, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, would find nearly everything looking different from what he expected to see. A traveller from the Middle Ages, on the other hand, would find things looking very much the same as they had done in his day. The lives of most of the people he saw would be like the lives of his contemporaries. That is because most people were peasants. The peasant of 1700 lived, for the greater part, like his mediæval ancestor. He existed frugally. He bought very few luxuries. He won the necessities of life by long toil from his patch of land. Some of his precious crops or beasts had to be taken to the barn of his feudal lord. Some had to be taken to the tithe-barn of the local parson. Still more had to be sold to pay the royal tax-collector ; and this terrible official usually handed over the duties of collection to one of the more prosperous peasants, who knew pretty well how valuable were the goods of every one (except perhaps his relatives) however carefully the signs of plenty were hidden. This was a thing the mediæval peasant had not had to cope with—at least, not to the same extent. The strong king was a modern innovation. He had to pay for his big army somehow, and it was wicked to suggest that the lord should make a contribution. The peasant was lucky if he escaped with a fifth of the fruits of his labour. He was used to it, just as he

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was used to the rain and the wind, the plague and the death of his friends. It was all as God ordered. Some of the peasants worshipped God in rather a different way. They did not all look up to the Pope as the Holy Father. Some of them looked up to the king. They believed that the "King's Evil" could be cured by the king's touch. Some of them listened to the orders of the elders of the congregation, men they knew (but Calvinism did not often spread to the peasants : it was essentially a religion of the men of the towns, since they found its democratic control a better safeguard of their freedom and their profits).

### THE WAY THE PEASANT LIVED

In most parts of Europe the peasant was still a serf. That is, the lord owned him : he was not free to come and go as he pleased. He was bound to his lord by a contract which he could never revoke, a contract which bound him and his heirs for ever. His only consolation was that it bound his lord as well : his little plot of land could not be taken from him. But he had to do forced labour for his lord, and to provide for the manor-house, the horses, the lady's dress, the feasts, the creatures to be hunted. In some places serfdom was more brutal than in others. In parts of Russia and Poland the serf was little more than a chattel-slave : he would be sold like a bullock. In France and in some parts of Germany the serf was gaining his freedom. The French peasant was acquiring more land, and was becoming a more dangerous customer. He was getting accustomed to more prosperity, and more freedom : he was developing new desires, which would not allow him to be content with being downtrodden. Yet it would not do to suppose that all French peasants were prosperous. Some of them, though free, had no land : they either worked, for miserable wages, or hired land, stock, house and equipment

from a lord, who exacted so much that they could barely live. (Such peasants were called *métayers*.) Arthur Young, an English farmer who travelled through France later in the century, described some peasants in the south who were forced to huddle together in winter with their beasts to keep warm. At the same time, the free cultivator in France had to pay contribution to his lord, to his priest, to his king. He had to do forced labour for his lord and (after 1737) for his king. He had to bring his suits in the lord's court, which was expensive and prejudiced.

That is not to say that the peasant's life was all misery. His parish priest was often a good friend ; and perhaps his clever son would go into a monastery, or into a seminary to be trained as a priest. He had his feast days, his dancing in the open air. He sometimes got drunk. Usually he had no idea of a better life. Lords were different creatures, to be obeyed, just as cattle were different creatures, to be beaten, and game were different creatures, to be hunted (though not by the likes of him : he must never let the lord catch him snaring the birds or foxes which infested his land). There was not much chance of a change. The most likely opportunity came when there was a call for soldiers to fight for the glory of the king (for now kings were building up big armies, and could no longer rely on small bands of professional retainers). Then, if he were adventurous, he could leave home, tramp along the muddy tracks that wound in and out of the forests, serving for roads, to an army. Here he might see something different from the everlasting large fields divided into strips (except for the one that was fallow that year) and the wooden plough tied to the bullock's tail. He might get into a town, where there would be new women, new drinks, new luxuries : he might plunder the town. Yet he found that war was not all sack. His officers (nobles) could have him whipped ; some of them seemed to



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like doing it. His pay was small, and often in arrears. If he got wounded with musket-shot, he might lie down and suffer until he died. There were no anæsthetics in those days. But if he did get home he would tell his friends of the other worlds he had seen. Slowly, in France at any rate, they began to digest these tales and brood over what might be.

#### THE MERCHANTS

Yet, although the life of the peasant was so much the same, the world was changing. There were countries, such as England and Holland, where serfdom had ceased to be. There men gathered in towns. No longer towns of the Middle Ages which were self-sufficing. The hand-loom was still turned. The worker still, in most cases, lived in his own home. But now, quite often, he was employed by a rich merchant, who paid him a commission for what he did. Very likely that rich merchant had other interests. He, or at any rate his friends, competed in the trade for yellow metal, or in the trade for black slaves. He bought luxuries, the old ones like spice (in greater quantities), the new ones like tea and tobacco. More than ever, he bought herrings. He made so much money that he could pay for soldiers, who fought for his freedom. He wouldn't allow a king to bully him. William of Orange had ruled both England and Holland, and had known how to work with the representatives of his merchants and not against them. The men of the Maritime Powers, and others too in the German, Italian and French towns had made so much money that they could live in luxury undreamt of by the mediæval kings. But the merchants of England and Holland had been so crowded together that they had obtained political power as well. In Holland they had done it by themselves; in England they had had to make common cause with the squires. They had argued about their rights. They had

insisted on being allowed to say and do the things they wanted. This we call the growth of liberal thought, and more will be said about it in another chapter. In the towns, even in countries where the king was powerful, the mob often got out of hand. The wealthy feared "gin lane," round the corner from their mansions.

#### THE KING OF FRANCE

The kings had been able to partake in these luxuries, and had found it amusing to collect clever men at their court. The Renaissance had shown that the Greeks had known how to enjoy life ; the kings patronised men who were full enough of that learning to make their lives more entertaining, with pictures, music, books, wit. The Renaissance had also taught the kings that the Romans knew how to rule. They had borrowed the Roman law. They had made big armies to enforce their word. Armies had to be paid for. The money was obtained partly by taxing the peasants, and partly by taxing the merchants. In return the kings usually allowed the business men to partake of the spoils won by the army, in increased trade. Colbert had shown the King of France how to build up commerce by shutting out foreign competitors, subsidising new industries, developing colonies as markets. This was called mercantilism : the Great Elector of Brandenburg copied the scheme and other rulers were thinking about doing so.

By this and other means the King of France, who happened at this time to be a hard-working and very competent manager, had made himself immensely strong. His predecessors had realised that the nobles must be put down. They had put them down, though not without paying their price. The nobles had the privilege of paying no taxes. They remained the feudal lords of their peasants. They were kept as ornaments. Louis XIV attracted them to his court ;

gave them ceremonial duties in the bedchamber and on the backstairs. He discouraged them from living on their estates. He wanted his *intendants* to rule the districts of France without interference from any local magnate. He succeeded so well that he threatened to dominate Europe. Holland stood in his way. The Dutch had first made their money out of herrings, but now made it from all kinds of commerce. They were the great carriers. They couldn't allow themselves to be dominated by Louis. Until the middle of the last century they had been allies of France, for both countries stood to gain from repulsing the Counter-Reformation and the reviving power of the Holy Roman Empire. The Treaty of Westphalia had settled the boundaries of Catholicism and clipped the wings of the Habsburgs. After that the growing power of France had turned the Dutch into enemies. They stood for something newer than Louis : they represented freedom of thought and the rising mercantile interest, while he was the champion of the old priestly, feudal order. Their natural allies were the English. The English Parliament had tried to help them, but had been stopped by the intrigues of Charles II and James II, who wanted to rule like Louis (with French subsidies). But in 1689 the English had sent James away and taken Dutch William for their king ; and from 1689 to 1713 they had played their part in resisting France. The Dutch had had to wait : in the meanwhile their leader, William, had mobilised Spain, the Empire, and the German princes, all of whom had felt the threat from Louis to be near and dangerous. The wars had gone on until 1713 : Louis XIV against most of Europe. Even the Pope had turned against him in the critical year 1688-89, since Louis had claimed control over the Church in France.

## THE WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION

In 1713 the representatives of most of the Powers sat in a room at Utrecht to discuss the peace. The war of the Spanish Succession had had a very different course from the previous struggles between France and her combined opponents. To start with, the situation had been favourable for Louis, who had planned to abolish the Pyrenees and part of the Alps. Most of Spain supported his grandson Philip ; while he had the valuable aid, in Germany, of two Wittelsbach electors, Bavaria and Cologne : he was thus able to meet his enemies on less unfavourable terms than usual. But this advantage was neutralised by the major military genius of Marlborough and the minor military genius of Eugène, to which he could only oppose the respectable competence of Villars, Villeroy and Vendôme.

Eventually, France was saved from invasion by the accession of the pacific Tory Ministry in England in 1710. England and Holland, abandoning the Emperor, made peace at Utrecht in 1713. The Emperor was defeated at Denain, after which he, too, came to terms at Rastadt and Baden (1714). Thus the divided enemies of France did not humiliate her to the extent that had seemed likely, for example, after the victories at Ramillies and Turin in 1706. But, even if the terms of Utrecht were not so hard for France as had been proposed before 1710, there was one major war aim which the Allies could claim to have completely achieved. That was the checking of French military dominance. From the opening of the Dutch War in 1672 this danger had been the chief consideration of most European statesmen. The great military machine of Louvois, controlled by an absolute monarch who could rely, for funds, on the continuous mulcting of the most prosperous industrial country in Europe, was during the next forty years

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liable at any moment and without any pretext to be hurled against any State not adequately protected by allies. It had often seemed possible that Louis would dominate Europe as well as France. Now this threat was over. The victories of the Allies had made it impossible for France, single-handed, to threaten the security of the other nations. She lapsed to the position of being merely the greatest single Power. As a result, the diplomatic history of Europe after 1715 becomes more tortuous : there is no longer a single great issue.

#### FRANCE AFTER THE WAR

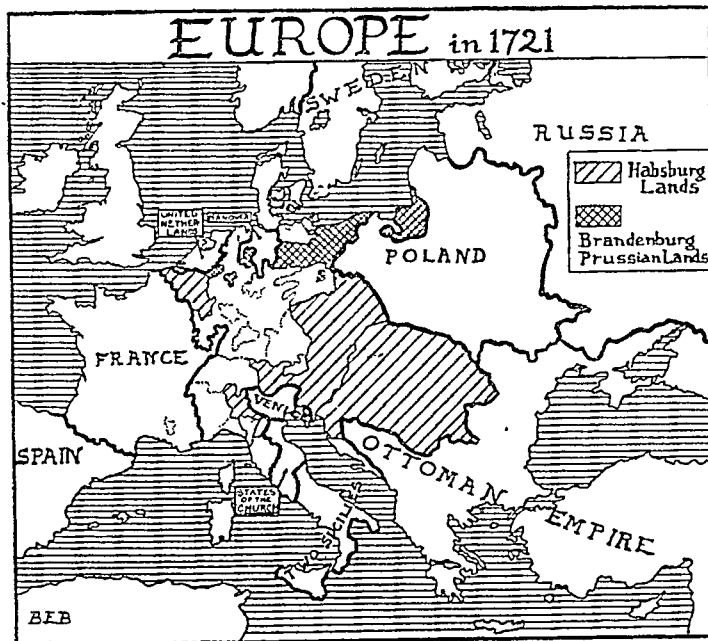
The detailed provisions of Utrecht have been explained in a previous volume, and it is only necessary here to indicate how the peace left each of the chief Powers concerned. France lost no territory of importance in Europe : she preserved her Rhine frontier, including the stolen Strasbourg. The French claimant, Philip V, was established as King of Spain, for which post he had long had the support of most of the Spanish people and, what was much more important, of all the Spanish clergy. But the union of the two Bourbon crowns was forbidden. (It is doubtful whether Louis XIV had ever looked forward to it : but his declaration of 1700, reserving Philip's rights of succession in France, had suggested to Europe that he did.) The exclusive commercial union between France and Spain, which had been feared by the Maritime Powers in 1702, did not materialise. And France felt the effect of the war. Though she was still by far the richest of nations, she had for some years passed the point at which her expenditure was within her means. The burden of taxation, which owing to the privileges of the nobles and clergy fell entirely on the trading classes and peasants, had become so great that the land became impoverished. The Government had

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

EVERY GENERATION must write its own text-books. The object of this series is to tell the story of Europe during the last nine centuries from the point of view of historians of the post-war generation. The stress is no longer on military and diplomatic manœuvres but on economic conditions and on ideals and the institutions created to express them. Room has been found to praise famous men and our fathers that begat us but none for national or sectarian apologetics. The aim has been to write a narrative which boys and girls in their sixteenth year and after can be expected to read with pleasure—and also with immediate profit, for the attempt has been made to omit none of the information which successful candidates for School Certificates and for Matriculation are expected to have. This series will not have achieved its object if it is not equally acceptable to adult readers. There used to be in the minds of most people a distinction between school-books and *books*. It is not necessary to emphasise now that the distinction is a false one. If a book is worth reading in school it is worth reading out of school. No book on a serious subject has been popular among adolescents which was not also popular with adult readers.

Thanks are due to Mr. J. F. Horrabin, Mr. H. G. Wells and Messrs. Cassell & Co., for permission to reproduce from *An Outline of History* the maps which face pp. 152, 208 and 242.









been in such difficulties, in fact, that in 1699 it had violated French principles by taxing the nobility ; and in 1710 the imposition of the *dixième* introduced a system by which the privileged classes would make a regular contribution, though they managed to evade much of this. The Edicts of 1692, 1704 and 1706 established the method of sale of municipal offices, and made local government progressively more corrupt and more expensive to the governed. Suggestions by Boisguillebert and Vauban (who built fortresses and studied economics : he said in 1707 that "one-tenth of the population lives by beggary and five-tenths cannot give alms to the first tenth because they are little better off") were disregarded. The public debt increased. The recuperative power of the country was great ; but recovery had been made more difficult by the flight of the Huguenots, an important mercantile and artisan section of the community. France remained the cultural centre of Europe. But the writers and talkers found things more difficult at the end of the reign, owing to that phase of strong orthodoxy which had led Louis to persecute Huguenots and Jansenists. The King's last act was an attempt to perpetuate his obscurantism. His son, grandson and eldest great-grandson died shortly before him, leaving the infant Louis, second son of the Duke of Burgundy, as his heir. Louis did his best to prevent the control of the country passing into the hands of the somewhat more free-thinking and free-living Duke of Orleans.

## SPAIN REDUCED

The Spain of Philip V was much smaller than that of Charles II had been : it lacked the Netherlands and the Italian possessions. But they had been doubtful assets. So be sure, former Spanish kings had exacted what money they could from them. But their opportunities in this

matter had been limited both by their viceroys and by the rebellions against their viceroys. Since Spain throughout the seventeenth century had kept up the position of a Great Power, with a special duty to interfere in all religious disputes, she had been involved in almost continuous warfare ; and the fact that she possessed these outlying districts had imposed on her an impossibly complicated strategy. The Spain of Charles II, for all its extent, was in a miserable condition. The bullion from America was pledged before it came. The evils of privilege and corruption existed in far worse state than in France, and there was none of the French administrative efficiency, or even effective centralisation. Agriculture was harassed by restrictions and over-taxation. Industry had never developed, except in a small way in Catalonia, which was often in revolt. The Inquisition stamped out heresy, free thought and private enemies at ruinous cost. The nobles were not only exempt from taxation, as in France ; they were powerful and troublesome. Between 1700 and 1713 Philip V had already given promise of doing rather better than this : and the promise was later fulfilled.

#### THE MARITIME POWERS

There is no doubt that England was the chief gainer from the war. She gained Gibraltar and Minorca, admirable bases for Mediterranean power. She made certain of Nova Scotia and the Hudson Bay, and thus got a start in the imperialistic struggle that developed during the century. She maintained her trade with Spain, and gained the Asiento—the monopoly of negroes and the vague right to “ send one ship a year to the Spanish colonies.” In practice she sent a fleet of ships, using one as a carrier to the coast. At the same time she preserved the very valuable Methuen concessions from Portugal, Spain’s enemy. She even gained a

best-favoured-nation treaty with France. To be sure, the National Debt increased. But the men who had lent the money soon had more to lend. Holland, on the other hand, was eclipsed after the war. She had spent too much and lost too many men. She retained her trade with Spain, and gained security by the Barrier Treaties, which permitted her to fortify the strong towns of the Austrian Netherlands. But she never really recovered from her efforts in the war. Moreover her position as a first-class Power had depended on two circumstances which no longer operated. In the first place, she had held a key position, until the middle of the seventeenth century, in the struggle against the Counter-Reformation, and after that in the struggle against France. Those struggles were over. In the second place, she had been by far the greatest commercial and sea-going nation. Now she was being overhauled by England. The republican, separatist estates of the Provinces had been often alarmed by the efforts they were making. After Utrecht they got away from the influence of Heinsius, who had carried on William III's policy and who died in 1720. They entered on a period of incredible caution in their foreign relations. The triumph of Holland was the swan song of her greatness.

#### THE EMPIRE

The Emperor had been concerned in three great wars : France, Sweden and Turkey had all threatened the Empire. But the Spanish Succession was the more important to the Emperor, particularly in his capacity as head of the Habsburgs. His dual position was still confusing, though not as disastrous as it had been in the time of Charles V. The Empire was a doubtful advantage to the ruler of Austria. It involved responsibilities, such as the restraint of Sweden and the defence of the Rhine : the princes of the Empire, almost free from control since

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Westphalia, were not very energetic in fulfilment of their common responsibilities. In the Spanish Succession War the forces raised from Germany for imperial defence were unreliable and small. Brandenburg, bought with the title of the King of Prussia, did little. Saxony was busy with the Saxon Elector's kingdom of Poland. Bavaria was an ally of France. The smaller princes preferred to hire their troops out to England. The effective strength of the Emperor lay in his position as Archduke of Austria ; but even as Archduke he was by no means absolute. He always found it difficult to raise men or money. After Utrecht, with the Netherlands, Milan, Naples and Sardinia added to his personal dominions, he found it just as hard. Leopold I had done a lot to save Germany from invasion. Charles VI found himself the holder of empty power over unmanageable dominions, with different laws, customs and systems of government. The one common factor was the Catholic Church.

## CHAPTER II

### SPANISH INTRUSION AND RUSSIAN EMERGENCE

THE UTRECHT SETTLEMENT had one great merit : it stopped the French ascendancy. But Spain was very much discontented with the Treaty. She had lost her Italian lands and the Netherlands. Her kings were debarred from the French succession ; and, after Louis XIV's death in 1715, only the ailing infant Louis XV and the Treaty stood between Philip and the French throne. Thus it is not surprising to find Spain trying to upset the Treaty. She was resisted by the Emperor ; by the Regent Orleans in France, since he was the heir to his young ward if the Treaty held ; by England, which was against Spanish control of the Mediterranean. The main theme of the next twenty-five years (1715-40) consists in the attempt of Spain to recover lands and prestige. It was complicated by the fall of Sweden and the rise of Russia, which will be referred to later.

Spain's government improved with the substitution of the Bourbon for the Habsburg line. She had, indeed, to pass through an unpleasant civil war before Philip V was finally recognised ; and after Utrecht the Catalonians, who, then as now, were anxious for separation, had to be brutally suppressed. But Philip's reign as a whole marked an improvement in Spanish conditions as well as in Spanish prestige. This was not due to any exceptional qualities in Philip, who was a lazy, dull-witted man, superstitious and silly, with a drawling voice and a suspicious manner. His

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most sensible act was his second marriage. His young bride, Elizabeth Farnese of Parma, was brought from her convent to be a queen. A small girl, tired from travelling, walked into the palace and sent about their business the royal relatives and court women who would have ruled the roost. From that moment, with a combination of tact and imperiousness, she drove Spain along an aggressive path of foreign policy and purged the internal administration. She had to stay in bed with Philip when he met his Ministers, and whisper to him what to answer them. She endured the solitary grandeur of the Spanish court, where her only solace was that Don Luis, the Infante, was as good a dancer as herself. She brought an Italian with her to rule the country. Alberoni began life as a gardener and became a cardinal. He organised a council of Ministers, as a step towards the establishment of a centralised despotism on the French model. He made the Government more efficient, and at the same time made heroic efforts to establish the sons of Philip and Elizabeth, Charles (Don Carlos) and Philip, in Italian States. When his failure in foreign policy brought about his fall, his internal work was continued by Patiño, a really able Minister (1726-36), who prepared the way for the reforms of Charles III.

### THE CARDINALS IN FRANCE

For eight years after Louis XIV's death (1715-23) Louis XV was a minor. The Regent, Philip of Orleans, evaded the restrictions which the late King had tried to put on his power, outwitting the Council of Regency. He had to keep the Treaty of Utrecht, for, if Philip of Spain was barred, he was the heir to the French throne. That obliged him to make common cause with England, Holland and the Emperor to stop Alberoni. The English alliance was not the only departure from the way of

Louis XIV. He and his Minister, Cardinal Dubois, dispelled the atmosphere of intolerance which had marked the end of the last reign. They were both immoral, easy-going, and rather disreputable. Yet they did something for France. They kept the peace : they avoided adventurous foreign policies. They economised ; and attempted to put French finance in order. In this they showed courage and vision. They listened to the advice of a Scotsman, John Law, an enthusiastic and honest man who saw rather beyond his times. He went in for inflation ; he tried to tempt the thrifty Frenchmen to invest their savings in a bank and a company, and to increase credit. This, he saw, would increase the volume of trade. He planned to develop the somewhat neglected French colonies. The Company of the Indies was formed for this purpose, and the subsidiary Louisiana Company was established to develop the Mississippi valley, where for a long while the colonists had struggled with poor success against economic difficulties and Natchez Indians. At the same time, be it noted, Englishmen were crazily investing in the South Sea Company and its unsound imitators. This was the time when men gave up hoarding money and wanted to get interest on it. For a time Law dominated France. He was the lion of every drawing-room. Everyone seemed ready to pour money at his feet. In 1720 he rose to be Controller-General of the Finances. But his investors wanted quick profits, which were not forthcoming. The affairs of the colony were not well managed, for the colonists sent out were poor, and they were forced to pay too much for their imports from France. Frenchmen missed their quick profits, and lost confidence. They wanted to withdraw their money—as the South Sea shareholders did in England. A panic set in. The Government had to dismiss and disown Law. By the end of 1720 he was in exile.



In 1723 Orleans and Dubois both died. For two years France had bleak reaction under the Duke of Bourbon. He was followed by Cardinal Fleury (1726-43), who cautiously resumed the policies of Louis XIV. He resumed, slowly, the habit of interference in all parts of Europe. He persecuted, as Louis XIV had done ; but in this he was resisted by the *Parlements* (bodies of judges appointed for life, who retained the right of refusing to register a royal edict unless the King visited them at a *lit de justice*). Their members were infected with Jansenism, the tendency towards Protestantism which had emerged in Louis XIV's reign : they forced Fleury to give way in 1732. His efforts to improve the finances met with little success. His one positive innovation was the *corvée* (1737), by which peasants had to work without pay on road- and bridge-making for the State. He was a well-intentioned old man whose only merit was that he was peaceful ; but he was too often overborne by Chauvelin and other warlike Ministers. Louis XV was a hard and fickle master : he grew up into a lazy, coarse-minded man, fond of playing practical jokes and deceiving his Ministers. He was not the man to carry on the work of the energetic and resourceful Louis XIV.

#### THE PRAGMATIC SANCTION

Charles VI had new dominions. That gave him new cares, without much new money to spend in solving them. In 1716 he went to war with the Turks, who had profited by the diversion of the Spanish Succession to conquer the Morea from Venice (the Venetians had just blown up the Parthenon). Charles had to borrow money from his ally George Lewis of Hanover (who had become George I of England in 1714). He won some victories : the Treaty of Passarowitz (1718) gave him the Banat and part of Serbia.

But that triumph gave him only another body of dissatisfied subjects. After that his main concern, apart from resisting Spanish aggression, was to arrange that his dominions should pass on his death to his daughter Maria Theresa, and, later, that her husband, Francis of Lorraine, should be elected Emperor. Leopold I in 1703 had made another arrangement, by which the Habsburg lands and imperial title would have passed to the Bavarian Wittelsbachs. (At that time it had seemed likely that Charles would become King of Spain.) In 1711 Charles issued a Pragmatic Sanction, by which his daughter would succeed him : for the rest of his life he was trying to persuade different people to agree to it. To begin with, his own dominions would not be given autocratic orders : it was not until 1724 that he persuaded all the various estates to accept the Sanction. Then there were the Powers to be bought separately with concessions : which meant that Charles was always giving something up. His finances were bad to start with, and became worse. He had one promising money-making scheme, the Ostend Company, which was to compete with the English and Dutch East Indian companies. But this had to be abandoned in 1731 to secure England's consent to the Pragmatic Sanction.

#### THE ALBERONI ADVENTURE

From 1715 to 1721 Alberoni attempted to secure Parma, Sardinia and Sicily. He worked out an amazingly bold and wide-reaching scheme. For two years he built an armada and collected soldiers ; surprisingly enough, he found a little money too. England and the Emperor, alarmed, made the Treaty of Westminster (1716). But both were busy. England had Jacobite plots and the Great Northern War, Charles had his war with Turkey. Alberoni sent an expedition to Sardinia and conquered it, and another force to Sicily

(which since 1713 belonged to King Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy). England opposed him : he arranged with Charles XII of Sweden that the latter should land in Scotland in support of the exiled Stuart, James III. Orleans opposed him : he set on foot plots in Paris to overthrow him. The Emperor opposed him : he got into touch with the disaffected Hungarians. Peter the Great of Russia was annoyed at the entry of an English fleet into the Baltic : Alberoni made a *rapprochement* with him. It was a grand design which Alberoni was not quite strong enough to carry out. His enemies combined, and luck was against him.

The plots in France were detected, and the Emperor made peace with the Turks. Charles XII, who had decided to conquer Norway on the route to Scotland, was killed. An English fleet, acting as auxiliary to the Emperor, sank a Spanish fleet off Cape Passaro (1718). The Spanish Armada, on its way to England, was dispersed by foul weather. English and French troops invaded Spain, while the best Spanish troops were locked up in Sicily. Elizabeth knew that the plan had failed. Alberoni was dismissed. Spain joined the Quadruple Alliance. Elizabeth ceased to plot against the Regent ; and arranged marriages, the Infante Luis to the Regent's daughter (who turned out to be a scandalous but amusing woman), and her own baby daughter to Louis XV (but this marriage never came off, since the Infanta was found to be too young). The Emperor consolidated his position in Italy by exchanging Sardinia for Sicily, so that the unwilling Victor Amadeus became King of Sardinia. George I, who had been backed up by his able Minister Stanhope, arranged to meet the Spanish claims in a congress at Cambrai. He would have given up Gibraltar, but Parliament wouldn't have that.

## THE RIPPERDÀ PLAN

Elizabeth was soon aggressive again. The Congress of Cambrai settled nothing. The French marriage scheme failed. In 1725 she gave her confidence to a Flemish baron, Ripperdà, who persuaded her to make an alliance with the Emperor. Ripperdà went to Vienna, and made an arrangement with Charles VI for mutual help. The two rulers would be partners in business : Spain would assist the Ostend Company, and keep out the English merchants. The Emperor's daughters would marry Elizabeth's sons. Spain would then, naturally enough, accept the Pragmatic Sanction. The Emperor would help Spain to recover Gibraltar. This new orientation of policy came as a shock to the diplomats of Europe : but they contrived to resist it. Ripperdà quickly lost his place. England, France and Prussia made the Alliance of Hanover : again a solid block was barring the way of Spain. The only tangible result was a war with England (1727). Admiral Hozier (who is chiefly remembered through his ghost) set out to attack the Spanish main. English captains engaged in the game of intercepting Spanish bullion ships. Stanhope had fallen : but English foreign policy was under the direction of Townshend, who was almost as vigorous. Once more Elizabeth had to accept a check. In 1729 the Treaty of Seville was made between Spain and England. Soon afterwards the Emperor's necessities compelled him to give Elizabeth a little of what she wanted. By the Treaty of Vienna (1731) Spain accepted the Pragmatic Sanction. In return Don Carlos became Duke of Parma. At the same time England accepted the Pragmatic Sanction in return for the abandonment of the Ostend Company. England and Austria entered on an alliance which was to last for twenty years.

## THE FAMILY COMPACT

The third stage in the Spanish advance was made with the help of France. By now the reasons for their hostility existed no longer. Louis XV had grown to be a lusty man with offspring ; there was no succession question. Inevitably, the two countries were drawn together by their common hostility to English imperialism in America. In 1733 the Polish Succession War broke out : Louis XV (after sending the Infanta home) had married Maria Leszczyńska, daughter of the Polish nobleman whom Charles XII had once put on the Polish throne ; now he supported the claim of his father-in-law against the Austro-Russian candidate. It was necessary to bid for Spanish help ; the first Family Compact (the secret Treaty of the Estorial) was made. By this alliance they could help each other's ambitions in Europe as well as America. France pursued her traditional policy of maintaining connections on the flanks of the Emperor. She had already got into close touch with the four Wittelsbach electors (Charles Albert of Bavaria, Charles Philip of the Palatinate, Clement Augustus, Archbishop of Cologne, and Francis Lewis, Archbishop of Mainz). This family *bloc* acted as a powerful counterpoise to Austria. Now she wanted to secure connections with Poland as well. Elizabeth, for her son, wanted Sicily and Naples. The Spaniards played their part well. They had had some valuable experience in the attack and capture of Oran, a nest of Moorish pirates. Their troops collected in Parma. The French bought the support of Charles Emanuel, the new King of Savoy-Sardinia, by the Treaty of Turin. The Spaniards didn't like this, as Charles Emanuel was to be given Milan : and so in this war there was the extraordinary spectacle of two allies not on speaking terms. The Spanish troops, very well commanded by Montemar,

started from Parma, marched, by permission, through the Papal States, aroused the enthusiasm of the Italians, and conquered Naples and Sicily after a short, brilliant campaign. Their allies, the French and Sardinians, were incompetently led—especially the Sardinians. The result was that in the north the Austrians held Milan.

Peace negotiations, sketched out at the Preliminaries of Vienna (1735) and continued intermittently for three years, finally gave Naples and Sicily to Don Carlos. Parma went back to the Emperor. Spain and France accepted the Pragmatic Sanction. So at last Elizabeth got a great deal of what she had struggled for. But there had been fighting in other parts of Europe over the Polish Succession : and that must now be explained.

#### THE GREAT NORTHERN WAR

The Great Northern War (1699-1721) was, like the Spanish Succession War, the continuation of a long struggle ; and it had a curiously similar origin. France and Sweden gained most from the Thirty Years' War : for the rest of the century France, in a large way, and Sweden, in a smaller way, threatened the independence of other nations. Therefore, just as the Great Powers joined in a league against France, so the northern States tended to league against Sweden. And the Great Northern War put an end to Sweden's dominant imperialism, even while her old ally France was being checked elsewhere. The parallel is spoilt by the fact that military genius, in the north, was on the side of Sweden. The first part of the war, from 1699 to 1709, was an amazing triumph for Charles XII. He faced a combination of Denmark, Saxony-Poland, and Russia. He drove Peter the Great out of his Baltic lands by the victory of Narva (1700), conquered Poland, forced King Augustus to return to his former rank of Elector. Frederick

Augustus, at Altranstadt (1707), frightened the Empire into doing nothing at a critical period in the Spanish Succession War, arranged to divide the world with Marlborough, and set out to conquer Russia. He advanced too far from his base, and found himself in the depths of the Ukraine. His defeat at Poltava (1709) led to the collapse of his somewhat jerry-built empire. Poland was recovered by Augustus, the Baltic lands were conquered by Peter ; only the help of the Turks (who cornered Peter at the Pruth) and the disagreements of his enemies saved Charles from complete overthrow. In 1715 these enemies gathered dangerously together, under the inspiration of Elector George Lewis of Hanover, who, suddenly translated to be King of England, took care to make his new subjects pay for their Protestant by backing the cause of Hanoverian territorial expansion. The war from 1715 to 1721 was anticlimactic and slightly ridiculous. Charles XII was an adventurer unable to find suitable adventures. Sweden had to maintain an empire beyond her pocket. There was a small body of highly professionalised soldiers who could be relied on to win battles whenever Charles (or his trained lieutenants, like Stenbock) could find an enemy in the field. But it was impossible for a country with the resources of Sweden to resist a huge coalition. The problem in the last phase of the war was really whether the princes could bear to let each other share the territory which all were agreed Sweden must give up. Peter conquered Finland. Charles gave up all serious attempt to resist the league. He adopted a new offensive, which was much more congenial. He attacked Norway : he was drawn into the Spanish scheme for enveloping England. His death at the siege of Fredrikssten in 1718 simplified matters : Sweden had now no temptation to go on fighting. The Allies tried more seriously to divide the loot they were bound to get. George Lewis, having

settled by agreements in 1715, 1718 and 1720 that Hanover ought to get the Bishoprics of Bremen and Verden, Prussia Stettin, and Denmark 600,000 rix-dollars, tried to induce Peter to stop fighting. An English fleet went into the Baltic : it did little more than cause bad blood between England and Russia. It certainly didn't prevent the Russians landing in Sweden and doing a little plunder. It was to this pressure that Sweden at last gave way.

#### THE RISE OF RUSSIA

The Treaty of Nystadt (1721) registered the fall of Sweden from her unnatural state. She was allowed to retain Stralsund and Wismar, on the ground that the more Powers there were in the Empire to interfere with the Emperor the better. She recovered Finland : but most of her Trans-Baltic territory was lost. The Elector of Hanover, who extended his rule over Bremen and Verden, became a first-class German prince as well as an English king. But the Powers which really gained from Sweden's fall were Russia and Prussia. By this treaty Russia may be said to have attained her majority as a European State. Peter the Great was a man of quite remarkable parts. He set out to perform a set of almost impossible tasks, and it was owing to his own courage, determination and ruthlessness that he achieved them. He gave Russia the framework of a centralised constitution. He deprived the nobles of their power and their beards. He made the Orthodox Church a State Department. He introduced a German middle class. He went to work in an English dockyard to learn how to build ships. By resolutely carrying on with the building of an army and navy he was able to prosper in his drive towards the Black and Baltic seas. He won the game against Charles XII after patiently losing a lot of hands ; and then he could feel that his new sacred city



of St. Petersburg was looking out on a Russian prospect. His foreign policy introduced Russia to the European Powers, and made it possible for her to play the arbitral part in Germany which had been Sweden's. He tried a number of New Economic Policies ; like many Russians after him, he tried more than one Five-Year Plan. He met his death through trying to rescue some soldiers who had fallen out of a boat. To the end of his days he did things for his people. Yet we must not overestimate his gifts to Russia. He gave her access to seas and suggested expansion ; but the following of his policy caused a lot of wars and roused a lot of coalitions. His Europeanisation was a cultural and economic ambition rather than an achievement. His successors seemed often to have to begin all over again. He left them power—if they didn't mind rebellions : a machine of sorts—if they didn't mind corruption. He left a tradition of brutality which they didn't mind at all.

#### RUSSIA MAINTAINED

The vigorous reforms of Peter caused much discontent, which was increased by his heavy taxation and imposts on trade. His immediate successors eased his burdens a little. His widow, Catherine I (1725-27), a woman of humble birth but great character who had romantically won her way to the palace, was the next ruler. She was fortunate in having the assistance of Osterman, a most able Minister ; with his help she instituted a Supreme Privy Council to control the executive. There is no doubt that her careful relaxation of taxes and general lessening of severity helped to make Russians happier. On her death Peter II (1727-30), the grandson of Peter the Great, came to the throne. He never grew up to rule, though he was a high-spirited boy. Neither during the autocratic rule of Menshikov, at the

beginning, nor during the aristocratic reaction, led by the Dolgorukis and the Galitzins, at the end, was there much disturbance of Peter's system. An attempt was made to compel the incoming Empress, Anne (Peter's niece), to submit to limitations by the nobles; she accepted the restrictions embodied in the Articles of Mittau. But she quickly repudiated them. She continued an autocrat. She was a vigorous, able woman: she knew how to choose good servants, such as Biren, Munnich, Lacy and the invaluable Osterman. She had to face the worst of the aristocratic reaction against Peter the Great's rigour; but the monarchy lost nothing in her hands. Unlike her two predecessors, she was severe, and lost popularity: but she didn't flinch. Like Peter, she imported Germans to be civil servants and merchants. She was not the least of the distinguished women who held power in the century.

#### PRUSSIA AND POLAND

During the second half of the seventeenth century Brandenburg Prussia took over the leadership of Protestant Germany from Saxony. The Great Elector had made a strong State and checked the Swedes: by inviting Huguenot refugees he had done much to make prosperous a not naturally rich land. His successor became a king. The next ruler, Frederick William I, secured his share of the profits from the overthrow of Sweden: this he did by masterly inactivity. As Prussia had been similarly cautious during the Spanish Succession War, she had some money and men left for the next war. Frederick William's actual gain consisted of Stettin, which was valuable enough. But his true success was more subtle than that. He waited, and watched the picturesque and epic exploits of Charles XII end, as they deserved to end, in a modern world of diplomatists. Prussia then inherited the moral weight of Sweden. If she

could avoid disastrous conflict with Russia, she had opportunities.

The other great enemies of Sweden—Denmark and Poland—were not in a position to profit by her fall. Denmark was too small and isolated—and not well enough controlled. Poland was big, but amorphous. The monarchy was elective and the nobles sold their votes. The King wasn't even a Pole. In 1696, on the death of the tragic John Sobieski, the Elector Frederick Augustus of Saxony had decided that Warsaw was worth a mass. He was probably mistaken. He was beaten out by Charles XII and rescued by his embarrassing friend Peter. His nobles had each the power of obstructing his actions by the exercise of the *liberum veto* ; for Poles could be compelled to do nothing without unanimity, and Poles were seldom unanimous. The position of Poland was naturally difficult : the eastern fringe of Catholicism, the western fringe of the Slavs, she was inevitably harassed by her co-religionist racial enemies and her co-racial religious enemies. And King Augustus, by becoming involved with Poland, was unable to direct his electorate of Saxony with the acumen which was necessary to maintain it in the midst of Austria and Prussia.

#### THE POLISH SUCCESSION WAR

Augustus the Physically Strong died in 1733. The Polish patriotic party, anxious to free their country from foreign interference, secured the election of Stanislaus Leszczyński as his successor. Louis XV felt bound to support his father-in-law, though the cautious Fleury was worried about it. Elizabeth of Spain had no special interest in Poland (though she once suggested that one of her sons might be elected King). But she was willing to support France in return for help in Italy ; so that two Great Powers were on the side of Stanislaus. The Emperor and the Czarina refused to allow

him to remain. They found enough Polish nobles to arrange a counter-election ; their candidate was the son of the late King, known as Augustus the Morally Weak. They chased Stanislaus to Danzig. A French expedition was sent to help him, but failed after some exciting adventures. Stanislaus, who had entered Poland disguised as a coachman, now escaped disguised as a peasant. Augustus III was established as king. But the French had to be compensated. Francis of Lorraine (who married Maria Theresa) was translated to Tuscany, where the Medici line was giving out. Stanislaus became Duke of Lorraine in his place. On his death the duchy was to revert to France, which thus advanced nearer to the Rhine frontier.

#### WAR IN THE EAST

As epilogue to this period there was another war. Austria and Russia made war on Turkey in 1736. They secured the alliance of the ambitious ruler of Persia, Nadir Shah. The Turks, however, were apt to become unexpectedly tough at a time when their cause seemed hopeless. In this war they definitely had the better of the fighting with the penniless Charles VI. The Russians did better, though some very skilful campaigns by Munnich and Lacy were necessary before the Turks could be driven out of any territory. Munnich and Lacy organised their transport with great thoroughness, and contrived the war so well that they gained successes in spite of the immense distances they had to cover, the persistence of Tartar irregulars on the Turkish side, and the strength of the Turkish defences. They captured the Crimea, Azov, Ochakov and Choczim ; their feats became the leading news item of Europe. But the failures of Austria and the defaulting of Nadir Shah, who set out on his grand enterprise of conquering India, forced the Russians to make peace. The French Ambassador at

Constantinople, Villeneuve, had been behind the Turkish Government in its declaration of war. Now he advised it during negotiations. By the Treaty of Belgrade (1739) Austria gave up the slice of Serbia she had won at Passarowitz. The Orthodox Slavs thus escaped from the Catholics to the comparative comfort of Mohammedan rule. Russia (by the Treaty of Constantinople) gave up all her conquests except Azoff. Turkey had not been dismembered yet. But Russian prestige had gained. The brilliant generalship of Munnich and Lacy in two successive wars made the European statesmen aware that Russia was now a big factor : hereafter they had to take her into early consideration. French influence in Turkey had been shown in the war and in the peace. In 1740 France made a treaty with Turkey, by which, amongst other things, France had the right to "protect" the scattered bodies of Roman Catholics in the Sultan's dominions.

### CHAPTER III

## THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION

THE PERIOD of twenty-five years after the death of Louis XIV is one of confusion in European history. Most of the States engaged in complicated diplomatic intrigues and became involved in unprepared wars. Their business ought to have been to recover from the great wars. Every country needed a period of retrenchment. In actual fact—although in most countries statesmen made an attempt—the only ones which really did get richer were England and Prussia. For seven years, indeed, after the accession of George I (1714) England engaged in an ambitious policy of settling Northern and Southern Europe (under the restless genius of Stanhope). But she didn't begin expensive wars. And after 1721 Walpole was in control. England kept out of wars and entanglements. He refused to enter the Polish Succession War, though he knew of the Family Compact. The debt was reduced. Colonists got on with the job of colonising ; business men increased the volume of English trade ; manufacturers increased output. Walpole felt his way towards the effective control of an organised body of Ministers by a responsible head ; this became known as the Cabinet. Frederick William I (1713-40) was a coarse, brutal and shrewd tyrant who knew that Prussia needed directive intelligence if she were to be really powerful. He disciplined himself and his people. He established the machinery of autocracy by his "General Directory," and

forced the municipalities to submit to his Councillors of Taxes. He paid his way—although he couldn't quite stop corruption. He broke in his nobles to the army and his peasants to the soil. He was a pious man, but he kept the Lutheran Evangelical Church of Prussia in its place. His educational system, one of the better ones of Europe, was under State and not ecclesiastical control. He hired a big army ; the gaps left in his barbarous system of conscription were filled by foreigners. He preferred tall men, whom he frequently reviewed and caned. His Prussia was rather like one big public school. There was no favouritism : his son Frederick, who liked French authors and French vices, was shut up in a fortress. Frederick William prepared for war—but didn't make one. He realised, like Colbert, that economic power is a necessary corollary of military power ; and he sketched the broad outline of the mercantilism which Frederick was later to adopt.

#### JENKINS' EAR

In 1739 Spain made war on England. Commercial rivalry had been growing. This was partly due to the change in Spanish economy. In 1715 Spain had no manufactures ; she got only bullion from the colonies and bargained away their trade to other Powers. But Alberoni and Patiño had started industries. Spanish business men now wanted markets ; they found that those in their own colonies were being filched by Englishmen, who stretched the *Asiento* to its utmost limits. The coastguards in America became stricter. They went so far as to cut off a few ears, including—or so it was alleged—that of Captain Jenkins. At any rate, he produced an ear, wrapped in a bottle, in the House of Commons. The English public was outraged. Walpole didn't want a war ; but the Opposition, the Press, and the public stampeded him into one. Expeditions were sent, as

usual, to the Spanish main, and to intercept plate ships. Anson sailed round the world. But the war was neither glorious nor conclusive, and eventually became overshadowed by a much bigger affair.

## ACCESSION OF MARIA THERESA

At the beginning of 1740 Europe had a moment of peace, except for the little war between Spain and England. And that consisted mainly of very distant naval exploits; on neither side were these so glorious as to make the Spanish or English want to bruit them abroad. But during the year three deaths occurred, which quickly broke this peace. First, Frederick William of Prussia died, leaving to his son Frederick a testament full of good advice (some of which, such as "Pray to God," and "Avoid an unjust war," Frederick didn't take), an army of 80,000 men, and a million and a half pounds (which Frederick took). Then Charles VI finished his mistakes by dying at this inopportune moment, leaving his dominions (for what they were worth) to his young daughter Maria Theresa. Thus death had provided a Royal Lion and a Royal Lamb. It went on to remove the one person who might have made them lie down together; for immediately Anne of Russia, who would never have allowed Frederick to play ducks and drakes with Germany without interfering, died and left her difficult throne to the infant Ivan VI. Thus things were set for war. The two great pacific influences in Europe, Walpole and Fleury, were losing their grip of their respective Governments. Elizabeth of Spain, whose appetite had not been spoilt by age or experience, was on the rampage for more Italian lands for her boys. At first, indeed, the accession of Maria Theresa passed off without unpleasant comment except from the Wittelsbachs, who began to hold family conclaves about it. The Pope was kind, Frederick



was suave, the French bowed. But very soon there were movements from all quarters to despoil the young Archduchess. Before dealing with the war, however, it will be well to examine the motives of the rulers who attacked Austria. (It must be made clear that none but rulers had a say in it ; at the time the people, who were expected to fight, were not in most cases expected to be full of patriotic enthusiasm. They marched as they were told.)

#### FREDERICK THE GREAT

First, there was Frederick. It is not difficult to understand how he decided to attack Maria. His rigid upbringing had the effect one would expect on a bright young man who had a chance to read French books on the quiet : it made him hate all restraints, moral or otherwise. He was the first real disciple of Machiavelli to play a big part in Europe. Previous kings had either fought for the good of the Church, or had at least pretended to be doing God's will. Peter had been ruthless enough, without any of this nonsense—but he had been distant. Now in the middle of Europe, Frederick, completely cynical, used his power to get what he could, with no pretence at justification. He found himself, on his father's death, suddenly possessed of a lot of money and a big army. Prussia had been ground down to provide his expenses and his men ; the working classes were thoroughly and completely exploited for the creation of a military machine. The soldiers had been drilled, caned and crushed until they were as little human as the new bayonets they carried. What wonder that an ambitious young man, with all this material and without moral restraint, should use it ? After all, what is the good of running a country entirely for the purpose of having an army, if that army only drills, and bullies civilians ? He wanted Silesia, a rich, taxable province. So he seized it.

## OTHER ENEMIES OF AUSTRIA

France was casually ruled by Louis XV. His Ministers argued to get his ear, or bribed his mistresses. The general trend of their policy was to attack the Habsburg when convenient ; to make the Rhine more French and the German princes French satellites. To be sure, the French Government was in debt ; but the country was rich, credit was still fairly good, there was a regular army of 160,000, and more men could be raised by the press-gang. The Wittelsbachs wanted the title of Emperor, and more land. They resented the upsetting of the arrangements made by Leopold I in 1703 : he had said that the daughters of his son Joseph (who married into the Bavarian and Saxon lines) should have precedence of the daughters of his younger son Charles. These smaller German princes were jealous of the power of Austria ; as yet Prussia didn't seem dangerous. Spain was now a richer country, and Elizabeth could afford her wars : working in conjunction with Naples and France, she hoped to conquer Milan. Augustus of Saxony-Poland found it difficult to make up his mind.

## ENGLISH IMPERIALISM

There were a few friends left to Maria. England stood by the Pragmatic Sanction. But that was less through abstract loyalty than because English business men and colonists were already fighting the French. (It must be remembered that, whereas the Continental nations went into war at the dictate of a king who wanted territory for himself or his relatives, Englishmen went to war to get markets for the merchants. This made things rather quaint for George II. In Europe he was the Elector George Frederick of Hanover, despot of his State, which he could drive into or out of war to suit his personal wishes. In

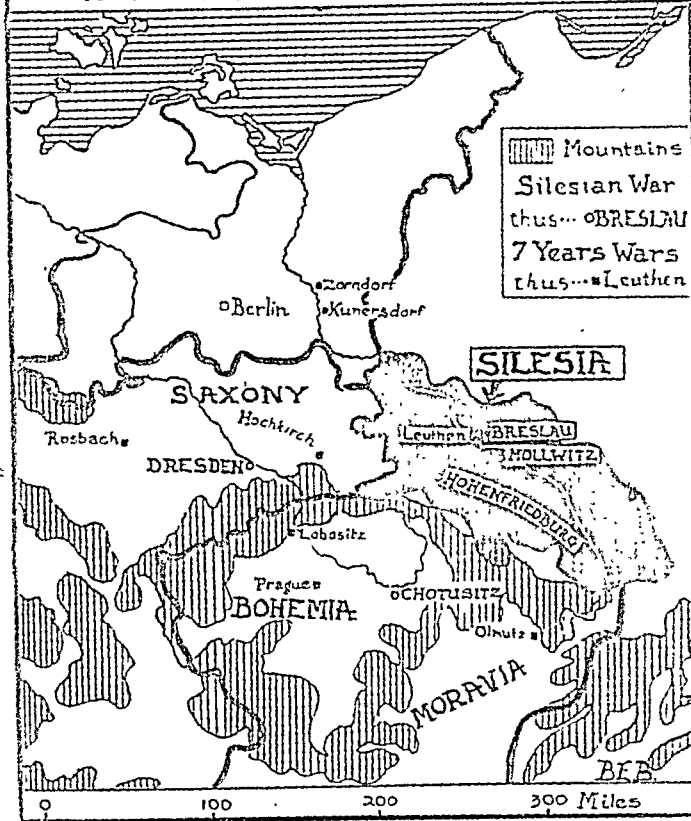
England he was His Limited Majesty George II, summoning his soldiers and sailors to serve him and his tradesmen. It is true, he hadn't many soldiers, for Walpole, that economist, had only left him 16,000 : and he hadn't the best of fleets. But there was enough money in England to finance the English Government, at war, and several others too ; the indigent Maria Theresa had to have English subsidies.) In North America the pioneers were carrying their Bibles, muskets and axes beyond the Alleghanies. There they became aware that French forts were about ; for the French who lived round the St. Lawrence mouth and those who lived round the Mississippi mouth were joining up with a line of block-houses, and hemmed the English in. The Indians, who were treated as potential proselytes by the French and their Jesuits, and as niggers by the English, often fought for the French. Thus there was trouble ; and it was only a question of time before the clumsy concentration of odd State militias was backed by English organisation and money. In India, where the Moghul Empire was too difficult for the successors of Aurangzebe (who died in 1715), Dupleix, Governor of Pondicherry, began to interfere in native squabbles. The English East India Company soon followed.

#### THE RUSSIAN SUCCESSION

Holland was well-disposed towards Austria ; but her contribution to the war was not made until the Barrier Fortresses were attacked. Charles Emanuel of Sardinia, who knew that the ruler of a buffer State must know when to change sides, allied with Maria Theresa. The successive Russian Governments were friendly to Austria, but, from one cause or another, were unable to interfere. To begin with, French diplomats induced the Swedish Government to start a ridiculous war with Russia ; this was disastrous



# CAMPAIGNS of FREDERICK the GREAT



for Sweden, but tied Russia up at the crisis. A hundred thousand men were busy fighting the Swedes in Finland. To complicate matters further, Russia had a lot of court trouble. The Ministers of Anne competed bitterly with each other to rule in the name of Ivan VI. Eventually Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great, suborned the grenadiers, assumed the throne, sent all the rival Ministers to Siberia, and initiated a policy of Russia for the Russians. This meant that German officials were expelled ; that the centralised Cabinet was not used. Elizabeth, an attractive, lazy woman, was quite clever : and her first real Russian Minister, Bestuzhev, was a man of exceptional ability. But these changes and intrigues took time, and before Russia could intervene effectively the damage had been done. In 1743 the Treaty of Abo ended the war with Sweden : Russia gained Southern Finland. But all Russia could do with the Austrian Succession War was to hasten its end.

#### FREDERICK'S FIRST ATTACK (1740-42)

The first phase of the war may be said to include Frederick's first adventure, down to the Peace of Berlin (1740-42). In December 1740, without warning, he led 30,000 troops into Silesia. Maria Theresa had few soldiers ready and less money. In the crisis she made a sentimental appeal to the Hungarian nobles for help. She showed them her baby son Joseph and touched their hearts. (In later years they must have wished they had strangled the brat.) They cried out that they would die for their king, Maria Theresa. But, although her gesture made the Hungarians enthusiastic about the Habsburgs for the first time for centuries, their levies couldn't be ready in a moment ; and she had to meet Frederick with quite inadequate forces.

Frederick was a versatile man. He could play the flute and compose music. He liked to talk to philosophers like

Voltaire, who told him the latest theories of how an enlightened monarch should rule. Frederick tried to put some of the ideas into practice. He enjoyed the conversation of writers and intellectuals ; he spoke and wrote in French, saying that German was the language of a barbarian. From these pursuits he could turn to organise a war. His army was so well trained that it would follow him faster along the muddy roads than his enemies could go : thus he could arrive at crucial points at the right time. War in the eighteenth century was almost as dull as in the twentieth. Two armies moved amongst fortified towns ; sometimes they collided, and then line met line. Marlborough had been good enough to do more brilliant things ; he concentrated masses of men at points in his line and won sweeping victories. No one else did this until the time of the French Revolution. Frederick was proud of his oblique attack, by which his line of infantry would engage a part of the opposing line at a disadvantage. But as a rule he preferred defensive tactics. He won battles because his soldiers would carry out orders exactly, and move in line with precision. Even so, he ran away from a battle more than once.

The Austrian army, under a valiant but slow general, Neipperg, overcame its difficulties and marched to recover Silesia. Frederick had scattered his forces unwisely ; but Neipperg allowed him to concentrate some of them at Mollwitz near Breslau. On April 10, 1741, the Austrian cavalry charged the Prussian cavalry, and drove them off the field. Frederick ran away with them. But his infantry stood firm ; their muskets (which they could fire rapidly owing to their new iron ramrods) and their bayonets and their discipline gave them the victory in spite of the Austrian superiority in cavalry. The victory could not be followed up, in any military sense. But it made up the minds

of the hesitant spoilers. Belleisle, a French diplomat, persuaded the Wittelsbachs, Augustus of Saxony-Poland and Frederick to make a league against Maria. Charles Albert of Bavaria was elected Emperor Charles VII. A French army under Maillebois advanced into Germany and prevented George Frederick of Hanover from moving. Another force under Belleisle joined the Emperor Charles, who, after a raid into Austria that would have taken him to Vienna had he been a better general, invaded Bohemia and took Prague (November 1741). But Frederick, whose forces were tired, had deserted his allies. In October he had made the Convention of Klein-Schnellendorf with Maria. Under English persuasion, she agreed to leave Frederick in Silesia : indeed, she surrendered to him Neisse, the one fortress which she still held. For a few months he watched events. Very soon they appeared to call for his further intervention.

Maria Theresa called up reinforcements from Italy. Ignoring the invasion of Bohemia, the Austrians overwhelmed the Bavarians who had been left in Austria at Linz : they then occupied Bavaria. Frederick was afraid that Maria Theresa would have an opportunity of hitting back at him. In December 1741 he suddenly invaded Moravia. There, he found that he was unable to capture any towns, and that his allies would not follow him. He therefore moved into Bohemia to join them. Charles of Lorraine, the Austrian general, attacked him at Chotusitz (May 1742). Once again the Prussian infantry won the day, and the attack was beaten off. Frederick saw that it was time to come to terms again. Walpole fell, and the new Ministry, controlled by the somewhat more bellicose Carteret, was likely to intervene in Germany. He made the Treaty of Berlin (July 1742) by which Silesia was definitely ceded to him. He left his allies to get on as best they could without him. Augustus of Saxony, who had



gained nothing and lost a lot of men and money, made peace too.

#### THE WAR IN GERMANY (1742-45)

For two years after this a number of armies moved slowly and clumsily about southern and western Germany. The one clever movement was a retreat. Belleisle, stranded in Prague, marched back to the Rhine in the winter of 1742-43, losing a lot of men in the process. Maillebois, who failed to rescue him, was jeered at by Paris, and the Government was forced to dismiss him. After that the French had to face an Austrian army in Bavaria, and an Anglo-German army under George Frederick moving slowly southward from Hanover. This second army blundered into a victory at Dettingen<sup>1</sup> in 1743 : but nothing much was done about it. Charles of Lorraine, having made sure of Bavaria, advanced to attack Alsace. Old Fleury died in 1743 : the more vigorous Cardinal Tencin took his place. He sent a good army of 80,000 men under Marshal Saxe to invade the Austrian Netherlands. This move had to be cancelled owing to the attack on Alsace : but soon that too had to be abandoned when Frederick took the field again.

He was afraid that Maria Theresa was winning too much. He therefore invaded Bohemia again in 1744. He failed to achieve very much. The Austrian armies from Bavaria and the Rhine threatened to catch him in a trap : he retreated. Worse, Charles VII died (January 1745) : and now the States were alarmed at Frederick and rallied to Austria ; Bavaria, Saxony, the Ecclesiastics. Elizabeth of Russia, now quit of her Swedish war, made proposals to George Frederick for intervention on a large scale. Frederick's luck held. Carteret fell, and was succeeded by

<sup>1</sup> Handel wrote a *Te Deum* to celebrate this victory.

Pelham, who did not want a German war (though George II offered to fight a duel with Frederick). The English urged Maria to give way to Frederick. The concentration of Austrian troops in Germany led to defeats in Italy and the Netherlands. One last attempt was made to recover Silesia : it was thwarted at Kesselsdorf (December 1745). Maria gave way. By the Treaty of Dresden (1745) she once more ceded Silesia to Frederick. He, on his side, accepted her husband as the Emperor Francis I : while the German States now became allies of Austria.

#### ITALY AND THE NETHERLANDS

In Italy the Austrians, with the aid of the Sardinian army and the English fleet, had the better of the fighting until 1744. Twice, in 1741 and in 1743, the French achieved momentary superiority in the Mediterranean, and on each occasion they transported to Italy a Spanish army which made things difficult for the imperial cause. But the English had their day in 1742, when a fleet bombarded Naples and forced Don Carlos to suspend operations for the time. Traun, the Austrian general, defeated the Spaniards at Campo Santo (1742) ; in the next year Lobkowitz invaded the territory of Naples and almost reached the city. But the return of Frederick in 1744 made the position of the weakened Austrians difficult. Genoa joined France : a combined Franco-Spanish army of 70,000 invaded Sardinia and Lombardy. They had almost captured Milan and bought Charles Emanuel out when in 1745 Frederick made peace again at Dresden. A new Austrian army of Italy was able to ease the situation : though a plan for the invasion of France was stopped by the resistance of Genoa.

The Netherlands expedition, begun by Marshal Saxe in 1744 and interrupted by the invasion of Alsace, was resumed in 1745. The Dutch, driven to defend their barrier

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towns, did so badly : and the main opposition to the brilliant Saxe came from the dull Duke of Cumberland with an Anglo-Imperial force. The French won a victory at Fontenoy (1745). English troops had to go to crush the Jacobites, Austrian troops to resist Frederick : so that in 1746 Saxe took Brussels and Antwerp. After Dresden and Culloden he had to meet with rather more formidable opposition : yet he won further victories at Roucoux (1746) and Lauffeldt (1747).

#### THE END OF THE WAR

Abroad, there had been raids. The French in India won Madras : the English in America, Louisburg. But here and in Europe, nothing decisive happened except that Frederick had gained Silesia ; this was less through military brilliance than through fortunate circumstances. That was all. By 1748 most of the countries were ready for peace. The Pelham Ministry saw no point in continuing the war, of which it had never really approved. Philip V of Spain died in 1746. His son, Ferdinand VI (1746-59), was in no mood to fight for his half-brother's ambitions : indeed, he was a very pacific man. France was short of money. Charles Emanuel thought it was time to talk of terms. Maria Theresa couldn't do anything without the English subsidies and the Sardinian army. So peace was made at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748.

France and England restored their colonial conquests. (The colonists kept on fighting.) France gave up her conquests in the Austrian Netherlands ; in return Maria Theresa gave up Parma to Don Philip, brother of Don Carlos. Things were left much as they were. Most of the combatants meant to fight again. But there was a difference. Now, Bavaria and Saxony were tired of Prussia. They were no longer satellites of France. They were ready to work

with Austria. Maria Theresa had lost Silesia and Parma ; but she had gained some allies in Germany as well as arousing enthusiasm among her own subjects. On the whole, she did not find the war a disaster. England obtained a confirmation of her trading privileges with Spain. So the merchants did not go empty to bed.

#### PREPARATIONS FOR ANOTHER WAR

The war had lasted a long time, without settling very much. Maria Theresa was anxious to get Silesia back. Frederick knew this and had to be careful. He knew that there was a danger of an alliance against him, and that it behoved him to keep his army strength up. The English and French colonists were still quarrelling. A commission sat from 1751 to 1755 to try to settle the boundaries in America, but made no settlement. Elizabeth of Russia and Bestuzhev were alarmed at the growth of Prussia. They kept in close touch with the Austrian Government. Frederick had insulted Elizabeth ; she had personal as well as public grievances. The only important State which was not likely to make war quickly was Spain ; for Ferdinand VI and his Queen Barbara were determined on peace. But everywhere else there was a feeling that war was likely, and in most cases preparations were made. Frederick was the best prepared. He was not merely concerned to prevent attacks on himself : he wanted to annex more territory as he had annexed Silesia. He wanted (as he said in a will prepared for his successor) Saxony, Swedish Pomerania, and the Polish " Corridor " which cut off East Prussia from his other dominions. The Elector of Saxony would be compensated in Bohemia. He tried to prevent a punitive alliance against himself while planning further conquest. But on this occasion his diplomacy was not so mighty as his sword.

## KAUNITZ AND THE DIPLOMATIC REVOLUTION

Austria was dissatisfied with the English alliance. France was dissatisfied with the Prussian. What more natural than that these two Powers—both determined to fight again—should come together? Yet it required a great deal of negotiation. The tradition of Habsburg-Bourbon hostility died hard. The credit for the reversal of the old alliances belongs to Kaunitz, who was ambassador at Paris from 1749 to 1753, after which he became Chancellor of the Empire. He devised a new policy which was to have a big influence on Europe. The essential feature was opposition to Prussia. To offset this, alliance must be made with Russia and France. This policy involved in the long run a connivance in Russia's expansion in Eastern Europe: Kaunitz remained in office for nearly forty years, and during that time Austria, the chief rival of Russia in the scramble for Turkish territory, was converted into an accomplice. The Russian alliance had been made in 1745 and renewed in 1748. Relations with Elizabeth and Bestuzhev remained good in spite of Prussian intrigues. To secure the alliance of France was a more difficult matter. It was not until 1756, when the French Government heard that England and Prussia had concluded the Convention of Westminster, that Louis XV began to be really impressed with the Austrian suggestions. Then he moved. It seems to be established that this was one of the few decisions he ever took without being primed by his mistresses or Ministers. He made the Treaty of Versailles with Maria Theresa, by which he undertook to help her with soldiers (he only promised a few of these) and money. Russia joined the alliance in the same year. Saxony and Sweden, which were threatened, also promised to assist Maria Theresa.

England under Pelham and Newcastle (who became

Prime Minister in 1754) made little preparation. The Government was aware of the rivalry of the colonists with the French, but did little to prepare for war or secure allies. The tendency was to keep on good terms with Russia and Prussia. Bestuzhev was determined to have an English alliance ; and in 1755 the Convention of St. Petersburg was made. But in 1756 England and Prussia made the Convention of Westminster, which, as shown above, provoked the Alliance of Versailles. The result was to make the Convention of St. Petersburg ridiculous. Russia and England couldn't remain allies if their respective friends were at war. Bestuzhev, who stood for the Anglophile policy, soon after fell from power. But this Anglo-Russian *rapprochement* served Russia well, for it made Frederick think that he had nothing immediately to fear from Elizabeth. He was soon to be disillusioned.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR AND ITS SEQUEL

IN 1756 ENGLISHMEN AND FRENCHMEN were already fighting. In the previous year, Braddock had led a collection of colonials (including a young squire, George Washington) and English troops against Fort Duquesne, which, from its position on the Ohio, was the key point in the chain of forts from the Mississippi to the St. Lawrence. The French had surprised and overwhelmed him. Since then, naval encounters and further skirmishes in the colonies had taken place. In August the war became a European one when Frederick led his army into Saxony. It is characteristic that he asked the Saxon Elector (Augustus of Poland) to support him, offering him Bohemia if he kept quiet. To the Great Powers, this war was a punitive expedition against a small State—Prussia—under an exasperating king. Concentration of his enemies would “reduce him to the rank of Elector,” as Elizabeth insisted. Yet, at the same time that this huge coalition was being formed against him, Frederick planned conquest. He wanted to unite the scattered pieces of his country : he wanted to incorporate more civilised, richer cities. Europe planned to chastise this criminal. The criminal planned further crimes.



## FREDERICK ENCIRCLED

The war in Europe consisted of a slow encirclement of Frederick by the Allies, delayed by a series of brilliant moves on his part. The war outside Europe consisted of contests between the French and English navies, and of colonial fighting, in both of which England, owing to greater enthusiasm on the part of the Government, a longer purse, and more man-power, got the better of the French. Frederick was opposed by greatly superior numbers. During the early part of the war he was able to collect 150,000 men, and he had English subsidies to pay for them. But his opponents could usually put more than 200,000 against him : and, as the war continued, their advantage grew. There was frightful loss of life in the battles. The lessons of Marlborough had been lost, and both sides relied on attacking in line. The Prussian infantry, trained until they were almost automatic figures, were led into positions and stayed there dully until they exterminated the enemy or were exterminated themselves. It was difficult for Frederick to make good his losses, particularly when his enemies began to winter on his territory ; whereas they, not having been quick to use all their resources at once, had more reserves to draw on. Frederick's survival was due to the fact that he overcame difficulties of transport and organisation better than did his enemies. To move an army quickly over eighteenth-century roads was very difficult. Frederick managed to do so, and thus was able to meet separately enemies that together would have been too strong for him. His general plan was to leave small forces to oppose each of the enemy armies : to hold the best troops under his own command, ready to move quickly against the most dangerous invaders. There were three main fronts in Germany : a north-eastern, where Swedes (subsidised

by France) and Russians attacked ; a south-eastern, where the Austrian and other imperialist forces collected ; and a western, where the French and still more imperial troops attacked. (Assuming the present broadcasting arrangements to have been in force then, the north-eastern front could have been made the subject of running commentaries by the Berlin-Heilsberg-Hamburg group of stations ; the south-eastern by Leipzig-Munich-Breslau ; the western by Langenburg-Frankfurt-Stuttgart : with Deutschland-sender relaying whichever group contained Frederick.) The Allies ought to have taken better advantage of Frederick's weakness. But the Russian and Austrian generals were very cautious. There was not always agreement between the Allies. After a year or two it was only the rigid hate of Elizabeth that kept the team together. Yet her generals knew that if she died her successor, Peter, would recall them ; so that when she was ill they paused.

#### THE NORTH-EASTERN FRONT (1756-57)

The first year of the war (1756-57) was distinguished by the fact that the English Ministry of Newcastle handled it very ineptly. Against this must be set the fact that Russian troops were as yet unable to make themselves felt. They had a long way to come, they were not good at transport and supplies, and Aprakin, their commander-in-chief, was not the man to hurry them. They were slow to play their part, just as the Russians were in 1914, when they attacked in a similar direction. The fighting on the north-eastern front was therefore unimportant. Aprakin invaded East Prussia in August 1757. A small force under Lehwaldt was strong enough, not indeed to defeat Aprakin, but to discourage him from a serious attempt at occupation. In September Lehwaldt was told to abandon East Prussia to deal with the Swedes, who had invaded Prussian Pomerania

and seemed likely to be dangerous—especially if they could co-operate with the French who were advancing to Magdeburg. The Russians had no more fighting that year. Lehwaldt drove back the Swedes and levied contributions from Mecklenburg-Schwerin, which had been about to join the French. Thus Frederick was free to deal with the other two fronts. He had enough to do. Most of Germany was arming against him : the quaint tendency of recent Prussians to represent Frederick as a German national figure is not in accordance with the facts. Even the Bavarians served the Emperor, if untrustworthily.

#### THE BLOW AT AUSTRIA (1756-57)

In August 1756 Frederick invaded Saxony ; in October the Saxon army capitulated at Pirna. The winter, as usual, stopped the movement of armies ; but in April (1757) Frederick with 100,000 men invaded Bohemia. He would have preferred to strike at Moravia, and possibly do serious damage to the Austrians before the Russians joined them ; but he dared not keep too far away from the western front. Although the Austrians had more men about than he had, Frederick moved about quickly, seizing magazines ; and in May contrived to confront Charles of Lorraine near Prague with slightly superior forces (64,000 to 61,000). This was the biggest battle of the war. Frederick won, but with heavy losses which crippled his invading plan. He proceeded to invest the 46,000 Austrians in Prague city. But Daun, a very able if very cautious general, approached for relief with 54,000 men ; and Frederick could only spare 33,000 to go and meet him. The result was the battle of Kolin, where Frederick was so badly beaten that he had to leave Bohemia altogether. The Austrians, as usual, didn't follow up their victory. But the quick, decisive hammer-like

blow at the Empire had miscarried : and now Frederick had to attend to dangers from the west.

## ROSSBACH AND LEUTHEN

The defence of the Rhine had been allotted to the English expeditionary force under Cumberland ; together with a band of Hanoverians, Hessians and hacks it composed an army of 45,000. Cumberland tried to defend the Weser instead of the Rhine, was defeated (in July) at Hastenbeck by 110,000 French under d'Estrées, and made the Convention of Klosterseven, by which he promised that Hanover should remain neutral and the English troops go away. Here was disaster for Frederick ! (though Paris cursed d'Estrées and secured his retirement). The French, now under Richelieu, advanced on Magdeburg, threatening to get in touch with the Swedes and Russians. Another French army, under Soubise, joined a band of imperialist soldiers and moved in from the south-west. No question of Frederick invading Austria now ! He began to talk of suicide : he was always Roman and theatrical in his difficulties. But he acted as well. He went off to the west : recalled Lehwaldt to go after the Swedes : sent detachments to Magdeburg. No sooner had he gone to the west than a hundred thousand Austrians under Charles of Lorraine and Daun invaded Silesia, shut a Prussian army up in Breslau, and sent raiding parties towards Berlin. Frederick couldn't get a battle with Soubise—and he must have a battle quickly, to enable him to go back to the Austrians. He heard that Berlin was in danger. Back again he had to go, marching his tired troops with incredible speed. Soubise slowly followed, up the Saale. Then Frederick heard that Berlin wasn't in danger after all. He turned again—and at last came up against Soubise at Rossbach (November). Soubise would have avoided a battle if he could, and gone

on with the game of wearing Frederick out. But his troops were out of hand, and eager to have a go at the Prussians. So there was a battle. Frederick was able to show his most skilful manœuvring against an army that wasn't a team. He won. It was really a small battle. Frederick only had 22,000 men and Soubise not many over 30,000. But it had a big moral effect. The French—including Richelieu—went back over the Rhine. Soubise was mercilessly lampooned by the Paris public. The English were stirred : the Government decided not to ratify Klosterseven. Frederick quickly led his army back to the south-east. He joined his south-eastern army, and found the Austrians in possession of Breslau and most of Silesia. In December he attacked them at Leuthen. They had the advantage in numbers (55,000 to 40,000). But some of their German auxiliaries were unreliable, and it was the unreliable wing that Frederick attacked. The reliable Austrian wing was left out of the battle, and couldn't get into it in time. Frederick defeated the enemy before their left wing arrived : which was what Napoleon later failed to do at Waterloo. He rescued Silesia, and was again out of danger for a moment. If he had had the transport, he might have gone on into Austria at once. But it was winter.

#### PITT COMES TO POWER

During the year 1757 Frederick escaped from his dangers and finished with two victories. His allies had not as yet done much good. The Newcastle Ministry had done little to prevent war or to prepare war. When the war came it showed little grasp of the situation. The Hastenbeck fiasco has already been mentioned. The management of the navy was inept. Byng was allowed to let Minorca slip through his fingers, and was shot to give the impression that the

Government was in earnest.<sup>1</sup> In America, little was done to remedy the weaknesses of the situation. The English colonies, spread thinly over a long seaboard, were exposed to attacks from all points of the interior, owing to the enveloping French forts. The various colonies were slow to combine, and were at the mercy of the unified French command. The Indians (except the Iroquois) skirmished and raided for the French. Only in India did the English gain a notable success. There, the East India Company was roused to anger at the capture of Calcutta by the French-led Siraj-ud-daula, Nawab of Bengal. He had stifled a lot of Englishmen in the Black Hole of Calcutta. Their forces beat and deposed him at Plassey. The eccentric Clive struck a big blow for the British Empire. The general failure led to the fall of the Newcastle Government. After a brief attempt to constitute a Ministry under the Duke of Devonshire, who was unable to command the Whig caucus, a compromise was reached. Newcastle became Prime Minister again. Pitt, whom he and George II disliked, was put in charge of the war. Newcastle controlled the Whig majority in Parliament; he made sure that Pitt was supported in his war dictatorship. Pitt had impressed the country with his capacity for winning the war. He now began to justify his boasts. He worked well with Frederick. He planned a blockade of France and an assault on Canada. It was arranged that the English and Hanoverian troops in Germany should be commanded by Ferdinand of Brunswick, who soon showed that he could keep the French at the Rhine.

#### FREDERICK'S CAMPAIGN OF 1758

At the beginning of the campaigning season of 1758 Frederick had more soldiers available than ever. But he

<sup>1</sup> Voltaire remarked: the English shoot one admiral to encourage the others.

could not expect the Russians to delay much longer. He would soon have two Great Powers to cope with, and it behoved him to strike a quick blow at Austria before her ally arrived. This time, since Ferdinand could be trusted to look after the western front, Frederick was able to attack Moravia. Prince Henry of Prussia, his brother, held Saxony against the mixed imperialist forces which threatened it. Frederick, with 70,000 men, marched to Olmutz, and started a siege. But there was Daun, following him with an Austrian army : careful not to give battle, but making the siege difficult. Bombardment in the eighteenth century was not deadly. Cities had to be assaulted or starved. The Prussians were not good at sieges, and after wasting much time and life Frederick had to retreat. He marched through Bohemia : Daun watched him. There was no pitched battle. Frederick gained nothing, and lost time. Inevitably, the Russians came. Frederick heard that the Swedes were joining them : that the combined armies were in Brandenburg. Aprakin had been recalled for being too slow, and replaced by Fermor, who was too slow. But, slow or not, the Russians were coming nearer. Frederick had to leave the south-eastern front and march to stop them.

He came up with Fermor's army at Zorndorf (August 1758). The Russian general, who had heard of Frederick's skill, took care to defend himself with marshes. Frederick avoided the marshes but could not drive the Russian army away. The armies were almost equal in size, both having from forty to fifty thousand men. Neither side gained a victory : both sides lost a lot. The situation remained critical. But Frederick had succeeded in his object of stopping the Russian advance to Berlin. He returned to the south-eastern front, leaving the Russians and Swedes slowly to occupy Prussian Pomerania. Meanwhile the Austrians had raided Brandenburg, almost to Berlin, and

had invaded Saxony and Silesia. Frederick returned to Dresden (September). He found Daun securely entrenched amongst woods and hills near by ; far away in Silesia his fortresses were being reduced. He couldn't force Daun to engage in a battle. He therefore set out to relieve the pressure in Silesia. Daun kept near him. On the way, in October, Frederick allowed his army to be caught in an exposed position by the Austrians ; they defeated him at Hochkirchen. In spite of this, and in spite of his renewed threats of suicide, he got to Silesia and saved it for the time.

#### FREDERICK'S CAMPAIGN OF 1759

Frederick faced the spring of 1759, and the prospect was not good. His country was feeling the strain. He couldn't collect many more than a hundred thousand men, to meet all his enemies. Money was hard to get, in spite of the English subsidies. Now much of his territory was in the hands of invaders, and had to pay contributions to them instead. He hoped that the Austrians would be exhausted. They were indeed ready for peace ; but Elizabeth's enthusiasm and French money kept them going. He hoped France would get tired of the war. But the advent of Choiseul to power in 1758 had given her new energy. He hoped above all that Elizabeth would die, so that his friend Peter could take the throne. But Elizabeth remained obstinately alive. More, she appointed a new commander-in-chief, Soltikov, and bullied him into action. The Russian menace was greater than ever.

Frederick began, as usual, by attempting to entice the Austrians into a convenient battle. He failed again : Daun knew him well enough not to play into his hands. The summer was used up in manœuvres ; then, in August, Frederick had to go again to meet the Russians. This time,



an Austrian detachment under Laudon had joined Soltikoff : and the Allies outnumbered Frederick. He had only 43,000 men, while they had—including a number of picturesque Russians who were classed as “irregulars”—almost 70,000. Frederick drove his infantry to assault the enemy at Kunersdorf ; they did, and were slaughtered. Little more than half of the army came out alive. For all his appeals and curses, the assault had to be abandoned. He talked again of suicide, but remained alive to arrange more battles. He accused his men of lack of spirit, and urged his officers to use the cane. It was lucky for him that the enemy was so slow to move after a success. They did, indeed, enter Saxony, Brandenburg, and Pomerania ; the Austrians occupied Dresden. But they retired in most cases to go into winter quarters. In the west, Ferdinand of Brunswick had done his work well ; he had defeated the French at Minden, a victory of which the completeness was only spoilt by the incompetence of Lord George Sackville. His successor, the Marquis of Granby, who on one critical occasion charged into battle without his wig, somewhat retrieved the honour of English arms. Frederick spent the winter feverishly collecting money and men. He found it hard—especially to get officers. Young nobles had to be dragged from school to command. . . . It was small consolation to him that the English had won so many victories abroad that their imperialist schemes seemed certain of success.

#### FREDERICK'S PERIL (1760-61)

In 1760 the Austrians and Russians at last combined effectively. They put more than 200,000 men into the field. Huge combined armies entered Silesia, one of Frederick's richest provinces and one of his best sources of supply. Its resources now went to supply their needs. Frederick defeated a much bigger Austrian army at Leignitz in

August : but Silesia remained in enemy hands. Berlin was entered and a huge contribution levied for the Austro-Russian forces. By his victory at Torgau, Frederick temporarily saved Saxony. But in the next year the enemy armies were back again, slowly driving him from his provinces. He was coming to the end of his resources ; his people could not pay much more, and there were not many more men. Yet in this crisis the Prussians rallied round him. Their defeats had made them think they were fighting for a national cause. The cry : "Defend your homes" was effective then, as it always is. Frederick's piratical intentions were forgotten. Prussian sentiment was roused—and some Protestant sentiment too. Although Frederick was very little like a religious hero, some of his propagandists spread the report that the invasions were part of a Catholic-Orthodox plot. And so the old Brandenburgers went on making sacrifices. When a ruler can no longer get sufficient support by compulsion, it is useful if he can fall back on sentiment. So Frederick held out. The winter of 1761 was the most desperate of his career. The enemies were now in winter quarters in his territory. But in January 1762 his great enemy Elizabeth died. He was saved.

#### THE WAR FOR EMPIRE

The period from 1757 to 1761 was the decisive struggle of English imperialism. Pitt organised the war, snubbed his colleagues, appointed young and brilliant commanders. His first task was to blockade France. Thanks to the excellent naval organisation of Anson, this was done ; in view of the fact that the blockading had to be done by sailing-ships at the mercy of the weather, the blockade was extraordinarily good. When French fleets did venture forth they were defeated at Quiberon Bay and Lagos (1759). The blockade was of great importance in preventing the

French from helping their colonists in America. Here, too, Pitt's organisation was successful. For the first time the efforts of the various States were co-ordinated. Pitt planned a threefold attack on Canada. One force was to attack by the mouth of the St. Lawrence, another by the Hudson and Richelieu valleys, a third by the Ohio and the Great Lakes. In 1758 Amherst and Boscawen, on route 1, captured Louisburg, while on route 3, Fort Duquesne was taken. But in the centre an attack on Ticonderoga failed, leaving this expedition behind schedule. In 1759 Wolfe had to take Quebec all by himself. In the same year Ticonderoga was at last taken, while the third force got as far as Fort Niagara. In 1760 the three armies converged on Montreal, and Canada was won. In India the English victory at Wandewash (1760) made it fairly certain that the English Company, not the French, would be able to put its fingers into Indian pies. A lot of West Indian islands were taken.

#### THE END OF THE WAR

The end of the war was anti-climax. George III had become King of England in 1760. He wanted to stop the war. In 1761 Pitt was dismissed, and in 1762 Newcastle followed him. On the other hand, Russia left the coalition; the new Czar, Peter III, actually offered troops to Frederick for a time. The Austrians tried to keep up the fight, but had no success alone. A diversion was created by the entry of Spain. The new King, Charles III (1759-88) was a vigorous person who wanted to stop the English mercantile advance. In 1761 he made a new Family Compact with France; by this an important trading connection was established between the two countries, and from this date they may fairly be described as working together in imperial matters against England. But the only direct result of Spanish intervention was the English expedition to Havana. In

spite of the incredible incompetence of the Duke of Albermarle, the commander, Havana was captured. This didn't affect George's desire for peace. His new Prime Minister, Bute, went on with negotiations. Frederick saw that he was to be abandoned. Greatly annoyed, he abandoned his design on Saxony, and came to terms with Austria at Hubertusberg (1763). By this treaty things were left as they had been before the war. By the Treaty of Paris in the same year England took Canada and other colonial territories from France. England had won the colonial struggle. The war in Europe had settled nothing. The coalition against Frederick had failed; his schemes for conquest had also failed. It had been proved to everyone's satisfaction that Russian intervention was decisive. The Peace of Paris was compared by John Wilkes to the peace of God, because it passed all understanding.

#### THE REVOLT OF THE AMERICAN COLONISTS

There was an epilogue. The war had enriched England and exhausted the other countries. It is not surprising that there should have been a tendency to combine against her. It is perhaps unfortunate that English historians, who recall the occasions when Spain, France, or Germany became so strong as to rouse the other nations to coalesce against them, to preserve the "Balance of Power," fail to mention this striking example of England arousing a similar combination. Yet there undoubtedly was a widespread hostility to England, after 1763, due not merely to the cavalier way in which George had treated his ally. Until 1770 Choiseul tried to organise a strong Franco-Spanish combination which should control the trade of Mexico and South America, and keep the English out. In 1770 he fell from power, owing mainly—as will be shown later—to the fact that he took the Austrian connection too

seriously and the Dubarry connection not seriously enough. But in 1777 the enemies of England got their chance.

It is not within the scope of this book to examine in detail the causes of the revolt of the American colonies. It was due, first and mainly, to the fact that neither the cultured citizens of Boston, nor the self-supporting pioneers across the Alleghanies, nor the Whig Squires of Virginia,<sup>1</sup> liked the suspicion of English control. Secondly, the merchants of the coast towns disliked the English attempt to put new life into the navigation laws, which threatened their respectable contraband. Thirdly, the claim of the English Parliament to tax the colonists (Stamp Act, 1765; Declaratory Act, 1766) was resisted both on principle and from expediency. The States began to send delegates to make speeches to each other. Revolutionary agitators—certain to exist in an educated community, under foreign control—got a hearing. The English Government hired Hessian troops, who were disliked. In 1774 a skirmish at Lexington started a war. In 1776 the representatives of the States drew up the Declaration of Independence. In 1777 an enveloping movement, imperfectly planned by George's incompetent Ministers, went wrong (Lord George Germain forgot to post a vital letter to a general), and Burgoyne surrendered at Saratoga.

#### EUROPE'S REVENGE

The Americans had empowered that able diplomat, Franklin, to state their case at Paris. At first, he was regarded as a picturesque champion of a hopeless cause. Nobles who had read their Voltaire came to be polite to this man who actually fought for freedom. But Saratoga made a difference. The American revolt was now practical politics. France made war on England, sent soldiers (under

<sup>1</sup> As Burke said, slave-owners are most jealous of their own liberty.

Lafayette) and offered credits. Holland did something better ; she provided cash. Spain joined in. England found herself against a powerful coalition, so powerful indeed that she lost the command of the seas near America. For lack of naval support Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown (1781). The colonists were as good as free. When the English began to interfere with shipping, Russia, Prussia and Sweden formed an Armed Neutrality against her. France seemed likely to get revenge for imperialist losses. Eventually, the English navy recovered. Rodney, by his victory at the Saints (1782) resumed the command of the western seas, while Eliott defended Gibraltar with red-hot cannonballs. But at the Treaties of Paris and Versailles (1783) the independence of the American colonies was recognised. Minorca was given back to Spain—and thus the best base for blockading France's Mediterranean ports was lost. England's overweening colonial and commercial strength was curbed—though at a price which the French monarchy ultimately found rather expensive.



## CHAPTER V

### TURKEY AND POLAND

FOR NEARLY THIRTY YEARS (1763-92) after the conclusion of the Treaties of Paris and Hubertusberg, there was (apart from the American struggle—already described) no important war anywhere in which the leading Powers were opposed to each other. The Seven Years' War had been too exhausting, and too inconclusive. No ruler was anxious to risk such losses for such results again. On the one occasion on which the two Great Powers were opposed—the Bavarian Succession War—their respective armies marched in parallel lines for some months without attacking. Frederick and Laudon watched each other, waiting—without much hope—for an opportunity of fighting a favourable defensive battle. Most of the interest of the period lies in the attempt of the rulers to reorganise their States on the Richelieu-Colbert lines : this will be described in a later chapter. As for foreign relations, the essential feature was the desire of the great powers to enrich themselves at the expense of weaker powers. The policy of Partition came to the fore—an interesting commentary on the depths of irresponsibility to which statecraft had fallen. Catherine the Great of Russia was the arch-partitioner. She wanted to share Sweden with Prussia, Poland with Prussia and Austria, Turkey with Austria. Joseph II of Austria had elaborate schemes for exchanging German States and the Netherlands. It was better to secure



territory from a country which couldn't resist than to try to wrest it from a Power which had a big army. Thus there was no great war until 1792, when the Powers set out to make easy conquest of the revolutionary rabble in France. This time, however, they found more opposition than they expected—but that is a later story.

#### THE VICTIMS

A word is necessary on the States which were cast for the rôle of victim. First, Sweden. Ever since the death of Charles XII, in 1718, the country had been weak and faction-ridden. Rival parties of nobles, the Hats and the Caps, struggled and made government impossible. French and Russian partisans tried to influence foreign policy. But in 1771 Gustavus III, after a lengthy stay in France, ascended the Swedish throne. A year later he carried out a *coup d'état* which overthrew the power of the nobles and made him more or less absolute. In 1773 he made an alliance with France ; thanks to that Sweden was now out of the game, as far as slicing-up went. She could sometimes be bullied. She couldn't be treated as a prey.

In Poland, things were different. The first Saxon King, Augustus II, had tried hard and unsuccessfully to increase his power. His son, Augustus III, a feeble man, was also unsuccessful. The Polish nobles, masters of their serfs, were not to be mastered by a king whom they had elected. In the Senate, the opposition of one noble was enough to stop a new law ; so that new laws were not made. One powerful family, the Czartoryskis, tried hard to remedy this, and to free Poland from foreign (especially Russian) control. They encouraged Polish talent ; collected promising young men at their country house ; spread propaganda. They did their best with Augustus III, but finally found him hopeless. They then turned to Russia for help (showing not much

perspicacity). In 1763 Augustus died. After the usual bargaining and confusion, Stanislaus Poniatowski, the Czar-toryski candidate with Russian backing, was elected. But Poland became neither free nor united. The Catholic nobles hated the rule made by Catherine that the Orthodox minority must be regarded as equals. In 1768 a patriotic party formed the Confederation of Bar to protest against Russian interference ; sought help from France and Turkey : provided an excuse for even more interference.

Turkey had been a Great Power. But there were now no Sultans like Mohammed II and Solyman the Magnificent : no Grand Viziers like the Kiuprili. The rulers of the eighteenth century were sunk in the seraglio. Government was left to officials, who, lacking tradition and machinery, became corrupt. Turkey had triumphed because her troops had been fighting a Holy War ; but a defensive Holy War is hard to fight. Moreover, the Turks had never overcome any really well-organised western army. Now there were plenty of well-organised western armies against them. Finally, the Christians were disaffected. For some centuries they had been quiescent under Turkish rule, which had given them peace, tolerated their religion on payment of tribute, allowed them to carry on trade and agriculture (for the Turks in Europe were no good at either ; since they were merely an official and military caste). The voice of divine discontent had been lost in the comfortable murmur of prosperity. But as the Porte became weaker, discontent grew. Weakness begat cruelty. Foreign invasion reminded the Turks of foreign sympathies in their borders. They tried to suppress them, and lost their main prop—the quiescence of the governed. The revolt of the Black Mountain in 1702 had started the business : the Montenegrins were never completely controlled after that. It became evident that, apart from the Turks in the towns, the Albanian

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colonies which had been judiciously planted here and there to split the Christians, and a few Bosnian begs, there were no Mohammedans in the European Empire, and therefore no subjects whose loyalty was not conditioned by circumstances. Peter had thought of the idea of rallying his Orthodox subjects to a crusade to rescue their co-religionists from the infidel. Catherine revived it.

#### THE SPOILERS (1763-74)

During the years 1763-74 plunder was made at the expense both of Poland and Turkey. Frederick and Catherine were in alliance. France was against them. Austria didn't quite know what to do. The position was complicated there by the death of the Emperor Francis I in 1765. His son, Joseph II, an immensely earnest and ambitious man, was eager to practise statecraft ; but he found it difficult always to secure the assent of his mother, Maria Theresa, who was " co-regent " with him of the Habsburg dominions, and who was surprised and pained when her son proved to be enterprising. Her beloved and dutiful husband had had no ideas. Kaunitz, pretty firmly entrenched, had now to persuade two masters. To make things more difficult, France, the ally, couldn't be relied upon. Choiseul was all for working with Austria, but Louis XV occasionally awoke from his amorous sloth to pursue a secret policy of his own. This was anti-Austrian and anti-Choiseul. It was impossible for Kaunitz to carry out his favourite pro-Russian, anti-Prussian policy when the rulers of Prussia and Russia were in league. An attempt was indeed made to persuade Prussia to make a league against Russia. In 1769 Joseph visited Frederick at Neisse, and Frederick returned the call at Neustadt. But nothing came of these civilities. Frederick and Catherine were in closer agreement than the Austrians suspected. Frederick, who surprisingly

had some money in his coffers even after the Seven Years' War, was subsidising Catherine. The Austrian trinity had to play a passive part in what followed.

Choiseul made a spirited attempt to stop the expansion of Russia and Prussia. As has been shown, he was at this time busily organising a Franco-Spanish combination against England in America. He showed equal energy in his eastern policy. He prepared Gustavus for his Swedish dictatorship. He encouraged the Polish patriots. He persuaded the Turks to make war on Russia in 1768. Had he been able to work smoothly with Austria, he might have succeeded in his encirclement. But that was impossible in view of Louis XV's double-dealing and the confusion of advices in Vienna. The Russians began to defeat the Turks on land. Incited by Russian agents, the Greeks of the Morea (who had only a short experience of Turkish rule) began a revolt. In 1770 a Russian fleet, advised by English naval officers, sailed round Europe to the Levant and sank the Turkish navy at Tchesmé. And in the same year Choiseul fell. He had not only annoyed Louis XV with his foreign policy. He had failed to pay adequate court to the newly risen favourite, Madame Dubarry. He had made concessions to the *Parlements*, which were tainted with Jansenism. He had got rid of the Jesuits—and the King was never quite sure that this had not been a sin. Thus Choiseul offended at once the King's conscience and the King's vices—and had to go. His place was taken by the "Triumvirate," three silly men who did nothing about the east (except to send Gustavus to Sweden).

#### THE FIRST PARTITION AND KUTCHUK-KAINARDJI

In 1771 the Russian armies occupied the Crimea—which was ruled by Tartars under Turkish suzerainty. In 1772 Prince Henry of Prussia went to St. Petersburg to talk to

Catherine : there and then the scheme for dividing Polish territory took shape. It is fairly certain that the idea was originally Frederick's. There was a strong case, from Catherine's point of view, for preserving Poland intact and keeping it under Russian control. However, she agreed to the scheme : it had the advantage of securing Frederick's connivance in her Turkish plunder, and promised a chance of gains from Sweden. The Treaty of St. Petersburg confirmed the compact. An armistice was given to the Turks, to set Catherine free. The rulers of Austria were suddenly presented with an offer, which had joint Russian and Prussian backing ; there was an ominous " take it or leave it " note in the offering. They were to be given a part of the spoils ; if they didn't accept, then Russia and Prussia would nevertheless take their share. Austrian troops were already on Polish territory ; they were supporting the revival of antique claims on the county of Zips. In spite of this, Maria Theresa professed herself shocked at the proposed annexations. Frederick was not impressed ; he laughed at her conscience. Eventually Maria came in on the deal : "*Elle pleurait, et prenait*," noted Frederick. She received part of Galicia, which gave, amongst other things, control of the Carpathians. Russia got " White Russia." Prussia gained " West Prussia." After considerable pressure, King Stanislaus and the Polish Senate were compelled to agree to the cession. It must not be lightly assumed that this Partition was what nineteenth-century people would call a " violation of nationality." The peasants who changed masters had no great cause to love Poland, still less their noble masters. Catherine's new subjects were mostly Orthodox, Frederick's mostly Protestant. The Polish State was, in fact, an artificial affair, little more than a pompous excuse for anarchy. The Partition was really the application of efficient government to regions which had

# Acquisitions of PRUSSIA RUSSIA & AUSTRIA





not had it before. Frederick's share, especially, was well treated. The serfs were set free (in which they were luckier than the serfs in the rest of Prussia). The Prussian system was extended to cover them, and, whatever its faults, it was better than the old Polish Government, which wasn't a system at all.

Then the war with Turkey was continued. After a little more fighting, the Turks agreed, in 1774, to the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji. This marked an important stage in Russo-Turkish relations. The Greeks who had revolted were indeed abandoned by Catherine. But a vague clause in the Treaty stated the Sultan's anxiety to treat his Christian subjects properly. Thus Russia appeared as the protector of the Turkish Christians. It is true that the Sultan made no promise that was too definite to be evaded; he did, in fact, evade his promises. But the existence of this "treaty right"—however vague—provided an excuse for later Russian rulers to intervene in Turkish affairs, since they could always claim that the promises had not been kept. Catherine made it possible for Russian Governments to get an advantage from the position of Christian Defender. With regard to the Danubian principalities, Moldavia and Wallachia, Russia was given more definite rights of protection. The Hospodars—who were Greeks from the Phanariot, or merchant, quarter of Constantinople—were to be more or less free from Turkish control. Russian merchants were to have free passage of the straits, and, under certain circumstances, Russian warships too. For the rest, Russia gained Kerch and Yenikale, commanding the entrance to the Sea of Azoff, and the coast from the Dnieper to the Bug. The Crimea was to be independent. France was powerless to prevent Russian aggrandisement in Poland and Turkey. English Ministers approved of Kutchuk-Kainardji. They didn't see Russia as a menace yet.



## SCHEMES OF JOSEPH

For the next thirteen years (1774-87) interests shifted somewhat away from Poland and Turkey, though those questions were always open. Catherine followed up her successes. In 1779 Turkey was made to agree to the Convention of Ainali-Kavak, by which the Hospodars of the principalities had their tribute modified, and were less under Turkish control. In 1783 Catherine annexed the Crimea; Potemkin, her Minister and favourite, planned her "Tauric journey," which should signify her interest in her new expanding southern Empire. Joseph II and several ambassadors were invited on a procession through model villages, picturesquely built by Potemkin. In Poland the unfortunate Stanislaus tried to establish order. But he was too much under Russian tutelage. He complained that his port of Danzig was being starved by Frederick, who had its hinterland. (The situation in 1934 was an odd commentary on this.) This question, in fact, helped to cause bad blood between Frederick and Catherine, who admired but rather feared each other in general.

It is best to thread our way through this period by following the tortuous path of Joseph II. (It must be remembered that France and Spain were busy with their American war against England.) The Emperor, who strikes a somewhat noble aspect in his internal reforming policy, was utterly unscrupulous abroad. Just as he was eager to reorganise his dominions internally—as will be shown later—so was he determined by external diplomacy to round them off, to give them defensible frontiers, to get outlets to the seas. During the period he and Kaunitz went back to the Russian Alliance—and were opposed to Prussia. While Maria Theresa was alive Joseph was under a certain amount of restraint (although he didn't always tell her what he was

doing). After her death in 1780 he was master, and unchecked.

We can summarise his restless diplomacy under four main heads.

#### BAVARIA, AND THE RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

(a) In 1778 he and Kaunitz carried on secret negotiations for the acquisition of Bavaria. The existence of this State had always been a nuisance to Austria. It intruded on the path to her Italian and Tyrolese dominions. It had too often been an ally of hostile France. Like Austria, it was Catholic. It seemed most desirable to add it to the Habsburg lands. At the moment, there seemed a chance. The Wittelsbachs, who had caused trouble in the early part of the century by being so prolific, now caused trouble because there were not enough of them to go round. By 1778 they had lost the archbishoprics. (The Elector of Trier was Clement Wenceslaus, son of the late Augustus III of Poland-Saxony; the other two had no important connections.) In 1742, on the death of Charles Philip, Elector Palatine, the direct "Neuberg" line had given out: and Charles Theodore, of the obscure "Sulzbach" line, was translated to the Palatinate. In 1777 Maximilian Joseph, Elector of Bavaria (son of the Emperor Charles VII), died without issue; Charles Theodore thereupon combined the two Electorates in his own person. Now Charles Theodore had no legitimate children, but plenty of illegitimate ones. He agreed with Kaunitz that on his death Bavaria should go to the Habsburgs (Joseph II had married Maximilian Joseph's sister), and that in return his illegitimate sons should have duchies and things. But there was a distant Wittelsbach, Charles Duke of Zweibrücken, who was the next heir. He objected, not unnaturally, and told Frederick. Frederick thereupon made a complicated bargain with

the new Elector of Saxony, Frederick Augustus III (1763-1827) by which they should at one and the same time check Joseph and get something for themselves. The War of Bavarian Succession (1778-79) produced no battles: Prussian troops invaded Bohemia and didn't fight. But Joseph was stopped. He had to be content with a slice of territory which gave him convenient passage to the Tyrol.

(b) In 1780 Joseph approached Catherine and made a secret treaty. Catherine realised that Austria was of more use as an ally against Turkey than Prussia was. The scheme was that, if Turkey broke her engagements, Austria would send troops to help Russia. If Prussia broke her treaties, Russia would send troops to help Austria. There was some difficulty about drawing up the Treaty, since both rulers thought their name ought to come first. Eventually the matter was settled by each writing two letters. Thus Joseph, in return for Russian support against Prussia, had acquiesced in Russian expansion. For the next years the two rulers played with schemes of partition. In 1782 Catherine submitted a programme by which the principalities were to be independent; Austria was to get the Danubian provinces and some Mediterranean ports: Russia the Black Sea coastline to the Dniester: and Catherine's grandson (christened "Constantine") was to be emperor at Constantinople. Joseph disagreed with some of the details. So the planning went on. . . .

#### THE LOW COUNTRIES

(c) In 1782 Joseph tried to persuade the Dutch to give him the mouth of the Scheldt. His port of Antwerp had a difficulty as serious as, though different from, that of Danzig. Its trade was hampered by Dutch tolls at the Scheldt mouth, and was declining. Joseph had a fairly good case; he spoilt it by bullying. He was encouraged by the

fact that Holland was at war with her usual ally, England. But he didn't get much support from France. His own Ministers in Vienna disapproved of his going to war "on behalf of a few merchants in Antwerp." Joseph gave up : he got a few forts. At the same time, however, he finished the anomaly of the Barrier Fortresses. The Dutch garrisons marched home, and the treaties were abrogated.

(d) Joseph had stayed in Belgium for a long time, re-organising and negotiating with the Dutch. The result of his stay was to convince him that his Netherlands dominions were not of much use to him. It would be splendid if they could be bargained away ! He was prepared to treat States like counters—nationalism wasn't the fashion yet. He approached Charles Theodore in 1785, and suggested an exchange of Bavaria for the Netherlands. Charles Theodore was quite willing. He had made so many changes already that one more wouldn't matter. Besides, there were the illegitimate children to be provided for, and Joseph could help in that. But once more Charles of Zweibrücken was the obstacle. He refused to allow his expectations to be changed. Again he told Frederick. Frederick had found himself somewhat isolated since the Austro-Russian Treaty. He seized the chance of rallying the German States. Mainz, Saxony, Hanover and several smaller princes joined him in the *Fürstenbund*—a coalition to protect the German constitution against Joseph's innovations. Joseph, again, found his ally unreliable ; Catherine had no wish to fish in such troubled waters. Once more Joseph failed. This was the last triumph of Frederick, who died in 1786.

#### PITT AND THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE

The years 1787-95 mark a further spate of plunder, both from Turkey and Poland. In 1787 Catherine declared war  
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on Turkey. Frederick the Great, who might have made things difficult for her, was dead. His successor, Frederick William II (though he retained Frederick's Minister, Hertzberg) hadn't enough decision to do that at once. Catherine called on Joseph for help. He had too many troubles to respond at once, since his reforming policy was provoking revolts everywhere. In 1788, however, he joined in the war. At first neither the Russian nor the Austrian armies had much success. But at the end of 1788 the Russians captured Ochakov, an important fortress on the Black Sea. In 1789 Suvorov—one of the greatest of Russian generals—began an invasion of the Balkans which produced in turn brilliant successes at Fokshany, Rymnik, and Ismail. Although the Austrian troops had no comparable successes, the war was going well ; but there were complications in Europe.

This is the point at which England emerged to lead the opposition to Russian expansion in the Near East. The credit for setting this precedent which was to guide English policy for a century was due to the younger Pitt. Coming to office in his early twenties in 1783, shortly after the humiliation of Versailles, he had set himself to restore English prestige in Europe. Though his opponents laughed at a "kingdom entrusted to a schoolboy's care," he was soon successful. In 1786 he had made friends with Frederick William II. Both Governments had felt in need of an ally: Disturbances in Holland gave them an opportunity to embrace. The "patriot" party, in league with France, was trying to oust William V of Orange (1751-1802) (whose father, William IV, had become Hereditary Stadholder in 1748) from power. Prussia and England came to the rescue : Prussian troops restored order without fighting. In 1788 Prussia, Holland and England, following up this auspicious beginning, made the Triple Alliance ; ostensibly, to prevent further trouble in Holland, actually, to intervene

elsewhere. Pitt was determined to resist Catherine. Her drive to the south threatened the road to India. He prepared a grand scheme; the Triple Alliance should establish contacts with Sweden, Poland and Turkey, by which means it would check Russia and Austria as well as France. (As it happened, France was also opposed to Russian expansion, but the French Revolution made it difficult for her to take much part in European affairs.) It remained to be seen whether the Triple Alliance could remain solid enough to affect the course of Eastern events.

#### SUCCESS OF TRIPLE ALLIANCE

For a time the scheme worked. In 1788 the Polish patriotic party, profiting by the unexpected blessing of Prussian friendship, began what was later called the "Four Years' Diet," in which body sweeping reforms were carried through, including the abolition of the *liberum veto*. In 1791 a new, workable constitution appeared as their creation. Meanwhile, in 1788 Gustavus III declared war on Russia. This was rather in excess of his instructions, and it was partly nullified by the fact that Denmark at once declared war on him. But the war diverted Russian troops from Turkey; a Russian fleet was sunk, and at one time St. Petersburg seemed in danger. The Triple Alliance put pressure on Denmark and threatened Catherine and Joseph. A big Prussian army was mobilised in Silesia. Joseph began to feel the strain. In 1788 he began to protest. Kaunitz said that Austria couldn't possibly fight the Turks if Prussia attacked her. Catherine failed to soothe Joseph. In 1789 the secret treaty came up for renewal. Joseph wanted to break it off, and was only restrained by the incorrigible consistency of Kaunitz, who told him that Russia was *le plus naturel* ally of Austria. In 1790 he was faced by the revolt in the Netherlands, provoked by his

reforms. Prussia recognised the insurgents as a Government. At this hopeless point he died (February). His brother, Leopold II, succeeded him. Leopold, if as ambitious as Joseph, was more discreet. He realised that terms must be made with Prussia, and the rebels in different parts of the Empire conciliated. In June he concluded the Convention of Reichenbach with Prussia, in which he agreed to stop the war with Turkey and not to help Catherine. The Prussian threats were withdrawn. In 1791 Austria and Turkey made the Treaty of Sistova. Turning to Belgium, Leopold conciliated the moderate rebels and suppressed the others.

#### FAILURE OF TRIPLE ALLIANCE

Yet Pitt lost. Catherine, by making the Treaty of Verela with Gustavus in 1790, got rid of one of her difficulties. She was not so much impressed with Pitt's firmness as she might have been, owing to the fact that the Whig opposition maintained a representative at St. Petersburg to encourage her, and to do the opposite to Pitt. But the principal cause of the failure of the Triple Alliance lay in the hesitations of one of the Allies—Prussia. Frederick William and Hertzberg were usually not quite agreed ; but after much mystery it appeared that they wanted Danzig and Thorn more than anything—even at the cost of losing England's alliance. A partition proposal was made to Austria—that Prussia should get Danzig and Thorn, Austria should give back Galicia to Poland for compensation, and recoup herself with the Danubian principalities. Leopold turned it down. Therefore the Prussian Government listened to Catherine's overtures. She had been upset at Leopold's defection ; she now saw a means of bringing Austria to heel. So that the Pitt scheme came crashing to the ground. The Poles saw with dismay their Prussian friends join with their Russian

enemies in making the Second Partition of 1793. In 1792 Catherine made the Treaty of Jassy with Turkey, by which she got Ochakov (which Pitt had said she mustn't have) and the Dniester mouth. In the same year, too, Austria made another agreement, tying herself to Russia. Thus Pitt failed to save Turkey from Russia. His disciples were to have more success.

The Poles were in a hopeless position. But some of them showed spirit. A revolt, inspired by Kosciusko, rallied what there was of national fervour. But the only result of importance was to provide a much-needed diversion for revolutionary France. The three Powers decided to put an end to Poland. This time, Leopold was dead, and his successor, Francis II, was one of the spoilers. The troops of Suvorov were far too good for the Polish nationalists. Resistance was overcome, and in 1795 the last remnants of Poland were incorporated in the Russian, Prussian and Austrian dominions.





## CHAPTER VI

### THE "ANCIEN RÉGIME"

THE EUROPE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY was still the Europe of the Middle Ages, upset by the Renaissance and the Reformation. It is easy to exaggerate the extent to which it had been altered by these changes. True, there were kings who ruled over strips of land called "nations," in place of the theoretical world-state, and the practical baron, of the mediæval period. But the condition of the masses was very much the same. They were controlled by one "national" ruler or another: it didn't usually make much difference. The kings gained the right to rule as many people as they could, and called them a nation. There were, indeed, a number of religious dogmas imposed in different places, instead of one dogma everywhere. But the chief fact was that a dogma was imposed. The differences were chiefly apparent in the lives of the ruling and middle classes. The king maintained by modern weapons a power such as no mediæval ruler had had. His courtiers, if they were intelligent, had new sorts of learning to acquire. The Renaissance had tapped the classical stream. The Reformation had more or less dammed it up, but the thinkers of the eighteenth century—as we shall see—tapped it again. If his courtiers, on the other hand, were dull-witted, as they usually were, they hunted and quarrelled and lusted as their mediæval ancestors had done (except that the mediæval barons were not in most cases

their ancestors ; the religious wars had put a host of upstarts into old coronets). The technique was different, that was all. The middle classes were the most changed of all. They were now governed by national economics, rather than by town economics. They had a lot more money. Far more trade was done in necessities than by the mediæval merchants, who had been mainly concerned with luxuries ; and now the luxuries were more varied too. Business men generally were finding the advantages of using credit as well as cash. They speculated more—though they were liable to get terribly frightened at their rashness, as in the South Sea Bubble in England and the Law crisis in France. Towards the end of the century some of them began to play with machines. But the significance of the change in the condition of the middle classes was lessened by the fact that over large tracts of Europe there was no town middle class at all. There was, on the other hand, a widespread and important middle class of small gentry : sometimes “ noble,” as in France, sometimes not, as in England. Such men, who in the Middle Ages would have been esquires, attending the barons, were now squires, in their own right. They usually found that their self-interest as well as their honour lay in supporting the king—except where, as in England, they were strong enough to control him.

#### THE KING'S BUSINESS

Government was the king's business. There were exceptional places where this was not the case : England, Holland, Switzerland, some German towns, Venice, Genoa. But in general the kings had come to be fully accepted as the right and natural holders of all power—so much so that it was difficult to remember a Middle Age where this had not been so. Through the advent of firearms and with the

money of the townsmen kings had mastered their barons. This practical power had been buttressed by Divine Right. Either the king had taken over the ghostly authority of the Pope over his own subjects (as Henry VIII and the Lutherans did) or he had, remaining Catholic, persuaded the Papacy to connive at his divine rights, like the King of Spain. Soldiers fought for king, not for country. The French sang, "*Servir le roi Louis*." As a result of wars and accidents kings found themselves in control of large or small groups of people ; they continued the game of adding to their subjects. It must be understood that their practices were similar in most parts of Europe. There was little to distinguish the king of one " nation " from the king of another. The *ancien régime* was cosmopolitan. Kings borrowed their manners from Versailles ; usually they took their language from the same place. In the early part of the century we find them trying to achieve a number of objects :

(a) To build up a standing army like the Spanish of the sixteenth and the French and Swedish of the seventeenth century.

(b) To establish a rich and immoral court on the Versailles model. Some of them found it difficult to establish a rich one.

(c) To build up a bureaucratic administration on the lines of Richelieu in France.

(d) To adopt the Colbertian system of mercantilism to enrich their taxpayers.

#### FRANCE: THE MODEL

At the beginning of the century the authority of most of the kings was largely personal. If they were able and vigorous, their subjects obeyed them. France, by contrast, had a system of government, a machine ; and it excited the

envy of other kings. Richelieu had built it out of sixteenth-century precedents. Mazarin had defended it, Louis XIV had worked it. In the eighteenth century the French Government was the best in Europe. The country was controlled by agents of the central Government, which consisted of a series of small councils dominated by the King. The agents, the intendants, and their subordinates, the *sous-délégués*, had control of every activity. They dominated village communes, provincial estates (in the *Pays d'état* where they existed) and municipalities. They were drawn from the middle classes, for the nobles were completely excluded from political power : the local intendant was feared by the nobles in his district as much as by the peasants. Since the intendant's career led to the achievement of the *noblesse de la robe*, and to places on the councils and Ministries, it attracted many of the able and ambitious bourgeoisie. The great majority of them were capable, devoted men ; some, like Turgot, were very good. Their work, however, was seriously handicapped in a number of ways. Quick action was impeded by the rule that all important decisions had to be approved by the Ministers ; and the rule of Louis XV (1715-74) was not conducive to the speedy and efficient transaction of business. Louis was a lout. He did little work ; he tricked his ministers ; he appointed in accordance with the whims of vulgar Court women. A splendidly efficient organisation was hampered by intrigue, corruption, and frivolity at the top, though it was too good to be destroyed. The intendants were also retarded by the constant money difficulties of the Government. It was an age when expenses of maintaining armies were increasing : and nobles paid no taxes (except the *Capitations* and the *Vingtième*, imposed during Louis XIV's later wars). The *taille* and the hated *gabelle* (taxed Government salt) fell on the unprivileged classes.

Taxes, moreover, were not scientifically collected. They were farmed out to financiers. Thus the amount collected was far greater than that which the Government received. The intendants were constantly driven into conflict with the people whom they wished to help by the necessity of supporting the tax-farmer. And the complete absence of effective self-governing institutions resulted in the loss of the more independent and vigorous elements in the community. Their choice lay between submission and rebellion. The intendants did their best to govern a people which was growing too intelligent to be governed from above.

#### THE IMITATORS

The only other monarchy which could, at the beginning of the century, be awarded the title of despotism was that of Prussia. Here, the Great Elector had stamped out the forms of representative government. Frederick William I, with his General Directory and his Councillors of Taxes, was able to control his country as firmly as the King of France. He dictated to the municipalities. He had money and an army. Peter the Great crushed the nobles, but it was a personal rather than a permanent ascendancy. Later rulers had trouble with them. The Russian bureaucracy developed, by fits and starts, through the century. Catherine I and Galitzin organised it; Anne and Elizabeth let it partly lapse. The Kings of Spain had to consult their Cortes, and their nobles were not eliminated from the Government. The Habsburg rulers were by no means despots. They had estates which must be consulted and browbeaten in most of their dominions. In Belgium their power was seriously limited by the "Joyous Entry" of Brabant, and other constitutional checks. They found it difficult to keep an army or to pay their way. When the Polish Succession War began the Emperor's expenditure

was twice as large as his revenue. These and other rulers found themselves limited by surviving representative bodies ; most of them were able to control their nobles if they were resolute enough, but had no means of ensuring that their successors would be able to do so. During the century they did their best to build up absolutist machinery. They knew they must if they were to survive. Poland, where the nobles controlled the king, was first dominated and then demolished. It was an awful warning.

#### THE NOBLES

The nobles were losing their power. In England they had compromised with the squires and merchants to reduce the king, and to govern the country in a more or less tolerant way. Elsewhere, they held on to such power as weak kings left them. In France they had none. In Russia there was a nobility of "service," established by Peter, and pampered by his successors ; but they were not allowed much initiative. When Catherine II came to the throne, these nobles showed signs of disaffection. But Pugachev's rebellion broke out ; serfs all over the place showed that they were ready to kill their masters ; and those masters decided to stand by the Queen. In certain parts of the Habsburg lands they were strong enough to be a hindrance : Hungary was an example of this. In most of the German States they were politically unimportant. In Holland and in most parts of Italy they had ceased to exist. In Poland they continued to run amuck—and destroyed themselves. The trouble was that the nobles carried a lot of lumber with them. The feudal system had grown up because the nobles were the only people fit to do the work of governing ; they were the linchpins of the order, and the whole rignma-role was based on the fact that they were the effective rulers. In the eighteenth century their usefulness had gone : they

no longer governed. Yet much of feudalism was still there. Its justification had gone, its inconveniences remained. The nobles controlled the life of the peasants, who were in many places their serfs ; and even in those countries where, as in France, serfdom was fast disappearing, they retained many rights over the labourers. They demanded contributions and exacted forced labour. They retained the right of holding courts, with authority over the peasant ; these courts interfered with the centralising movement of the new monarchies, which tried to judge their subjects by the autocratic Roman law. Worse than this, the nobles were privileged. In France and most other countries their political eclipse had been bought by giving them economic irresponsibility. They didn't pay taxes. They were under no obligations. And during the century the tendency was rather to increase their privileges than to reduce them. The Prussian kings fostered the untouchability of their nobles, though they made them fight in the army. In Russia Peter III, during his brief reign (1762-63), exempted the nobles from most obligations : and in 1785 Catherine's Letter of Grace established them even more firmly. They were immune from taxation, and could not suffer corporal punishment. They had greater power over their peasants. The nobles were privileged also in their monopoly of many careers. If they were in many countries debarred from the Government, they alone had the right to hold high rank in the army. They alone had the opportunity to rise in most branches of the Catholic Church. Though grace might be attained by a commoner, the pontifical kind apparently couldn't. The only mitigating feature of these favours was that the nobility was not now so exclusive. In France the bourgeois could purchase nobility, or achieve it through the "robe" of administration ; the privileges were supplied with the purchase.



## THE MERCHANTS

The merchants were gaining in importance ; altering the world more than they knew. In some parts of Europe, they had done away with feudalism and themselves taken the titles and places of nobles. The burghers had the chief say in Holland. In Venice a clique of wealthy families ruled as they had ruled since the late Middle Ages. They had lost their pre-eminent trading position ; but there was still a lot of wealth in the city, and more could be extracted from the subject countryside. (The Venetian dominions contained three million people.) Venice was a fashionable holiday resort for Europe. It ruled its subjects with considerable tolerance. Genoa, if less wealthy, was even more tolerant. The city-governments in Germany had often fallen into incompetence ; the Emperor and the princes had had, pretexts for interference. Yet there were still many cities, such as Hamburg, mainly controlled by their wealthier citizens. In France the merchants were growing wealthier. They, and their allies the lawyers, monopolised the right to enter the administration. They were becoming more educated. Though there were large numbers of bourgeois who retained simple, almost boorish, tastes, there was a growing number that lived almost like nobles. They had, however, a number of grievances. They wanted representative government. They resented the interference of the intendant in their municipal business. Although trade was regulated according to the mercantile system, which gave them protection against foreign competition, they found that innumerable regulations hampered their business. Internal customs dues ; imports on trade ; the sale of monopolies. They resented also the nobles' exemption from taxation. It meant that they had to pay more than their

share. The discontent of the business men did more than anything else to start the Revolution.

The mercantile classes in other European monarchies were not so important as in France, which was the great manufacturing country. Elsewhere—except in the places already mentioned, where there was no other class to compete with them—the middle classes were less important politically. In Russia they had to be imported; the development of industries, such as the iron-mining in the Urals, was the direct work of Governments during this century. Much of the work was carried on by serf labour; the serf owners dared not oppose the crown. In Prussia and other German States the middle classes were quite important; but while, on the one hand, they were not rich enough to cause much trouble, on the other, they were for the most part conciliated by the monarchs; at least, sufficiently consoled, by bounties and protective duties and removal of internal barriers, to make them acquiesce in government which they were in any case powerless to upset.

#### COMMERCE AND MACHINES

The eighteenth century was a time of great commercial development. Most countries still regulated their trade in accordance with the mercantile system, the object of which was to make the nation self-supporting in necessities and rich in gold. They kept out foreign products, especially corn. They tried to bring about a favourable balance of trade, so that their store of bullion should increase. For most of the century England and France, the two largest manufacturing countries, did little or no trade with each other—so anxious were they to stop competition with their own producers. Trade rivalry led to colonial wars. Colonies were, to the eighteenth-century imperialist, what

some twentieth-century imperialists would like to make them : dumping-grounds for home manufactures, cheap producers for home needs. For most of the century England was opposed by the Franco-Spanish group in this struggle. She got the better of them, mainly because her merchants had more influence on Government policy, and consequently kept "war aims" in profitable directions and away from mere honour and glory. Pitt sent troops and men to Germany ; but it was "to conquer America in Europe." Towards the end of the century the American colonies revolted. Much of their resentment was due to the English application of mercantilism ; and their triumph contributed to the death of it. But Continental countries were slower than England to believe in the benefits of free trade : and the cataclysm of the French Revolution came to a continent still largely mercantilist. At the beginning of the century English commerce was less in volume than Dutch. But, while the Dutch trade remained at a more or less stationary rate, the English increased until it was the greatest.

The most important development of all, of course, was the Industrial Revolution. It began in England. The increase of capital led to a demand for places to invest it. The competition of the spinners and weavers led to experiments and inventions. Machines demanded power, which was found in steam. Power brought the mine and the factory. The factory collected large numbers of workers in the towns ; these workers, the industrial proletariat, brought entirely new problems to Governments. So did the new class of factory-owners, who wanted, and obtained, power to rule. But the full effects of this change were not made evident until the next century, and will be dealt with in a later volume. It is enough to say that the beginnings of the industrial change took place in this century, and

were of enormous importance. Machines made their appearance here and then over Europe as far as the Ural Mountains, but particularly in France. The new machine-industrialists found that their cumbrous Government regulations and their unfair burden of taxation hampered them in competing for foreign markets with their English rivals. The guilds and corporations had to be evaded. Lyons and other towns became manufacturing centres, like Manchester in England. But their merchants became noisily discontented. An industrial proletariat began to appear. The poorer classes became more mobile, and thus more dangerous. Crowds of peasants went to Paris to look for work. The old feudal methods of keeping the lower orders in submission had been suitable for dealing with a docile peasantry, tied to the soil. They could not handle the new proletariat. The mob was too much for them. Everyone knows that the herring women of Paris made a habit of "haranguing" the Queen at Versailles. The time was to come when they would be accompanied by industrial workers who would do more than talk to her.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

The development of commerce was hampered in the eighteenth century by the badness of land communications. English ship-builders found it cheaper to bring timber by sea from the Baltic than from forests a hundred miles inland. That was typical. There were few good roads in Europe, and few good vehicles to travel on them, such as they were. It took a week to go from Paris to Bordeaux. The main cause of the trouble was that Governments had seldom made it their business to provide roads. The stock method was for the noble, or the Government representative (the intendant in France), to make roads in his own district by calling on the peasants for *corvée*, or forced labour.

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This was most inefficient. Turgot, when he was an intendant, did away with *corvée*, and substituted a money tax with which he hired professional road-makers. This simple piece of common sense made an enormous difference to his district. But it was only a district ! Postal arrangements were rudimentary. Frederick William I established an efficient post in Prussia, and thereby did much to encourage trade. There is a familiar story of his caning a post-master who hadn't risen from bed in time to receive the early-morning courier. It is significant that, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Rothschilds, who started as a poor family in Germany, were able to make fortunes as bankers mainly by establishing quick communication between one brother and another. The London Rothschild heard the news of Waterloo a day before the Government. The poorness of roads, coaches, pack-horses and wagons is one of the things that remind us with a start of the big difference between the eighteenth century and to-day. There were others, such as the prevalence of bandits and footpads which the sketchy eighteenth-century police system couldn't stop. The nineteenth century saw a remarkable revolution in the fact that private citizens, largely through the improvements in communications, which made all places much more accessible to better police, could give up the practice of carrying arms. Probably because communications have become so much better still, there are certain parts of the twentieth-century world where private citizens apparently have to take up the practice again.

The eighteenth century was an age of lavish spending and high living by the nobles and their merchant imitators. Society was not restricted by moral codes so much as by manners ; it was in this century that much of the formal etiquette of our day was established. Yet if the wealthy

classes were mannered (like the speeches in Sheridan's plays) the poorer people were rude, violent and given to brawls in the street. Their dirty houses were in contrast to the big mansions, built in the style called *baroque*, a development of the Renaissance style—a sort of classical architecture run to seed—or *rococo*, extravagant in decoration, form and extent. The rude garb of the workers was a contrast to the powdered wigs, tight waists and knee-breeches of the wealthy (though at the end of the century noblemen began to wear the less formal pantaloon, and Charles James Fox set a new fashion by wearing his own hair long).

Such was the social system which is known as the *ancien régime*. The nobles lived after a pattern of elegance, and tried to use common sense. They disliked enthusiasm. They tried to achieve classical forms in art, and patronised the "classical" musicians, like Bach (though not very generously). They went on a grand tour of a continent which they didn't understand. With privileges, but without duties, they were becoming a nuisance. The bourgeois were jealous, and were becoming dangerously wealthy. They wanted a share in political power. The system rested on the labour of the peasants, who, except to a certain extent in France and one or two other places, were serfs. The peasants became aware of wealth around them, while they were poor. The town crowds got more noisy. In France there was dangerous discontent. In Versailles, Louis XV hunted, played tricks on his Ministers, held his levees. While his courtiers talked, squabbled and put on new nice clothes, his middle-class officials worked at their desks, making up arrears of administration, wondering when the King would find time to deal with all their business. A few miles away in Paris there was a different atmosphere. Rich merchants held receptions like nobles. Some of the guests were men

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who said the *ancien régime* was wrong. In the poorer quarters of the city the increasing crowd of industrial workers talked, listened to agitators, and muttered revolt. Peasants shook their fists at the tax-collector, and listened to stories from the towns.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CRITICS

THE CHANGES which had taken place in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—Renaissance, New Monarchies, Discoveries, Reformation—can be grouped together as one revolution ; and this was a revolution in thought as much as in anything else. The mediæval idea, of a world-state in which men strove to be ready for the City of God, was destroyed. But the religious wars had prevented the spread of the new freedom of individual thinking and living. The new habits had been confined to the few. Those few had learnt of how the Greeks lived and loved life. Scarcely anyone had learnt the lesson of how the Greeks governed and managed their societies. The kings had been pupils, in politics, of the Romans. Borrowing Roman law, they set to work to rule autocratically. The great majority of people continued to believe in a garbled form of the mediæval cosmos. For a great number of people there was no longer the Pope to venerate. But for most of them there was a God-appointed king who, with or without the Pope's permission, ruled them as infallibly as a god. The great mass of Europeans in the seventeenth century did really look upon their king as sacred. A Louis XIV was venerated even for his caprices. The nobles might rebel, or even overturn a monarch, but to the common people this sort of thing made no more difference, as far as their essential faith was concerned, than the subtle theological controversies of the



Middle Ages had done to the Catholicism of its peasants. The bulk of the seventeenth-century population was peasant, as it had been in the Middle Ages ; and it regarded the king, the noble and the Church (whichever it was) as being inevitable and not to be argued with. The seventeenth-century ruler had his way because most of his subjects would have regarded it as an impiety to stop him having it.

#### THE OASES

But beneath this calm sea there had been undercurrents. The new thought had been kept alive and had developed in odd places. Scattered here and there had been pioneers; who had demolished successive old beliefs. Certain groups of people had preserved the spirit of the Renaissance, and had demanded freedom of thought and action. The scientific spirit had been preserved : that is, there were still men who wanted to find truth, and would not be satisfied with the ecclesiastical dogma that truth had already been revealed. These groups had usually had most of their backing from the middle classes, and had flourished where middle classes were more important. They had usually been associated with Calvinism. This creed was the strongest expression of opposition to any kind of autocracy acting through a Church. It accepted neither a pope nor a king. Those who wanted political freedom had tended to accept Calvinism as a suitable means of voicing their revolution in religious terms. And, although Calvinism was intolerant, Calvinists had in many cases come to demand tolerance for their own irregularities and to concede it to those of others. The elders found that, once people had gone to such limits of dissent as would make them Calvinist, it was difficult to prevent some of them dissenting still more. Roger Williams, George Fox, Oliver Cromwell, Arminius, are examples of men in Calvinist surroundings who thus carried their

Protestantism to its logical conclusion. Thus we find, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Calvinist countries sometimes performing incredibly cruel acts of suppression, sometimes enunciating doctrines that were to free the world.

The first group of people to advocate liberty on a large scale had been the Huguenots. In the seventeenth century their work had been continued in the Netherlands and in England. The ideals of political liberty and constitutional limitation of monarchy had been propounded, and to some extent put into practice. For most of the century the great stronghold of freedom in politics had been Holland. When Dutch William came to England he confirmed the change of supremacy to his adopted country. During the Augustan Age of William and Anne, English thought led the progressive part of the world. By teaching her main ideas to the young French intellectuals England repaid the debt she owed to the Huguenots. Of course, some of the tolerant authorities had been tolerant because they were compelled, by force of circumstances. No ruler before Cromwell was really tolerant on principle. But it all helped.

#### NEWTON AND LOCKE

While the development of thought owed much to groups, it also owed much to individuals. Here and there, at great risk, pioneers had worked out theories which had destroyed the basis of belief in established things. The more important of them have been recorded in a previous volume, and it is not necessary to repeat them here. The two men who summed up these new things were Newton and Locke, who lived and wrote at the end of the seventeenth century.

Newton explained that the physical universe worked to a set of rules, in a logical way. Locke demanded that

Governments should similarly observe rules. These rules were decided by "contracts" between kings and subjects. They safeguarded the liberties of the individual. If a State were not ruled in a rational way, it ought to be altered. Thinkers of the eighteenth century were profoundly influenced by these two writers. Their world, they said, ought to be in order; obviously it was not in order. Some went further and said that in a reasonable world there was no room for revelation and miracles. They therefore attacked Christianity: all the more as they saw that many of the rulers of the Church were more concerned with their wealth and power than with spiritual things.

#### INTELLIGENT MEN BECOME DISSATISFIED

The early eighteenth century, then, was notable for the number of intellectuals who refused to accept the old authorities. They insisted on working out theories of what institutions ought to be like if they were to stand analysis. They found that institutions, as they were, fell short of this yard-stick. They proclaimed their disappointment; and, at this time, they were able, mainly owing to the great growth of the middle classes, to speak to a larger audience. It must be realised that two things are necessary to effect a revolution. First, there must be an important class of discontented people—discontented, that is, with material conditions. This condition is not dependent on misery; abject poverty and depression have, on the whole, tended to produce fatalists rather than revolutionaries. The negro slaves, the toiling millions subject to Oriental despotisms, did not make good revolutionary material. The middle classes and the peasants, especially in France, were growing more prosperous. Their prosperity was checked and sometimes thrown back by conditions which, they thought, could be altered. That brings us to the second thing necessary for

revolution, namely, the idea of revolution. No outbreak will occur until the discontented classes have lost faith in authority as constituted. No one takes up arms against Almighty God. But plenty of people will rise when they are convinced that the god they have worshipped is a stuffed dummy. In other words, discontent must become conscious. There must be people who know very definitely that they are putting up with conditions that are unpleasant and unnecessary. The previous chapter has shown the factors which made for material discontent. This one will show how that discontent became vocal and effective.

#### VOLTAIRE

The thinkers of the eighteenth century completed the process of the Renaissance ; that is, they applied the Greek ideas of government and liberty.

The first of the great writers was Voltaire. It was appropriate that he should be a Frenchman ; for France was the wealthiest country and the least contented. Voltaire was educated by Jesuits and society women. He spent some time in the Bastille, the prison to which the opponents of the Government were sent without trial. He visited England, where Bolingbroke, that brilliant cynic, introduced him to the intellectuals. He returned to France, made a fortune by speculation and a name by his writings. Voltaire was not a revolutionary, though he talked of revolution. He didn't like the rabble. He believed in absolute monarchy ; but his absolute monarch must be intelligent, and must govern according to natural law—that is, not by the arbitrary rules imposed by earlier kings or suggested by his own whims, but in accordance with clearly defined and equitable principles ; principles which would be right and " natural " for men who were not imposed on by the caprices of mistaken men.

Voltaire is not, like so many political theorists, remembered by one or a few great books. There is no compact volume which will explain his gospel. That is partly because he hadn't a gospel. He made no comprehensive destructive scheme. He just went about attacking things which were wrong. He protested against inequalities before the law, against any injustices he found in government. He attacked the Church ("*Ecrasez l'infâme !*" he cried), but not for its doctrines or devoutness so much as for its power, its wealth, its pluralities. He ridiculed the rich prelates. He argued fiercely against intolerance : and to do that in eighteenth-century France was dangerous, in spite of the growth of public opinion against oppression. Voltaire was mainly destructive : he destroyed evils by ridicule. He laughed the old order out of its dignity. He was important, although he gave no detailed plan to the revolutionaries. He above all others made Newton and Locke the intellectual checks of his generation. His technique of judging institutions was followed by others. His advice was taken by Frederick II and Catherine of Russia, who wanted to temper the evils of their rule. His attacks made it impossible for intelligent men to believe in the old things ; and by making clear the principles by which the existing order was found wanting, he gave his successors principles on which to build the new.

#### MONTESQUIEU

Montesquieu is perhaps the most appreciated French writer of this period. That is because he was different from them in his method and in his conclusions. They were the prophets (if unwillingly) of the French Revolution and he was the prophet of the slow constitutional progress of the nineteenth century. They judged institutions by applying rigid principles to them. He used

observation : he considered what was working best. He believed in liberty. His observations of England's constitution taught him that it can be attained only if the three functions of government are in separate hands—not controlled by one body, for that leads to tyranny. The first function of government is law-making : this *legislative* power should rest with a body of men elected by the people. The second is law-enforcing : this *executive* power must rest with the King or President and his Ministers. The third is law-interpreting : the *judicial* power must lie with judges who are free from control or corruption by either legislative or executive. These ideas, which were derived more from his imagination than from actual conditions in England, he set out very wittily and clearly in his book *L'Esprit des Lois*. They were taken up by the American revolutionaries and became the basis of the modern constitution of the U.S.A. They were taken up by the French Revolutionaries and we shall see what marks they left on France.

#### THE ENCYCLOPÆDISTS

Before Voltaire and Montesquieu had finished their writing, there were a crowd of writers all attacking the old order. A focus for their iconoclasm was found in the publication of the *Encyclopædia*. This was planned by Diderot to “bring together the knowledge scattered over the face of the earth” : he expected to produce a complete systematic treatise of the whole of life. He didn't succeed in doing that : Diderot and his collaborators did produce a list of things which were wrong, with cogent reasons for their wrongness. It was the eighteenth-century counterpart of the *Outline of History*, the *Science of Life and the Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* all taken together. For a time (1751-57) the successive volumes were published with the sanction of authority, which fondly imagined them to contain merely

information. In 1758 Helvetius raised the anger of the Church by coming out openly as an atheist and blasphemer. After that the *Encyclopædia* was suspect ; but after a time, and with great caution, the remaining volumes were published. There is no doubt that it exercised a powerful influence on the development of radical ideas. It was a sort of Bible of subversive doctrines. It labelled the evils of the old system. The result was that Paris became a centre of liberal opinion. Nobles discussed the iniquity of an order which kept them. Middle classes took up the fashion. A public opinion was created. Versailles and the court were neglected. Paris became the hub of French thought. There was a time, in the first half of the century, when the radicals met and talked in coffee-houses. But in the later part they did their talking in drawing-rooms. Sometimes the force of this public opinion checked the Government : in wartime it could overthrow a Maillebois or a Soubise. The worst excesses of vindictive repression were sometimes prevented. Numbers of nobles and bourgeois, almost forgetting their distinctness of class, talked about the badness of the régime, and argued about ways to renovate it. Some writers went further than the general opinion. Some attacked religion, some attacked property. But so far there was not the driving force necessary for a revolution. The talk was too destructive, too literary, too remote. It was turned into practice by Rousseau, the Americans, and Tom Paine.

#### ROUSSEAU

Rousseau believed in the right of every man (and woman) to happiness in this world. To a generation which still felt that happiness was the privilege of nobles and that this world was a vale of tears which man must suffer in the hope of eventual, heavenly felicity, this was an astounding, glorious paradox. "Man is born free and everywhere he is

in chains," wrote Rousseau at the beginning of his great book, the *Social Contract*. He added that man's duty was to rebel, to break the chains and to regain his lost freedom. Savages, before civilisation had enchained them, had been free. There was no question of going back to the state of happy savagery now ; the task was to make a new civilisation without chains. This would mean combining to set up a state-power which would reflect the "general will" of each nation. Rousseau did little to indicate the means by which the general will should make its wishes known. He was unable to plan beyond the machinery of a city-state like Athens or Geneva. But his insistence on the need of popular sovereignty was one of the major events in the world's history. However clumsy, he was right. He also proclaimed the rights of the individual in a way which most serious thinkers have since considered unanswerable ; and, although when he was called on to advise practical politicians he made suggestions which seriously interfered with those rights, his call has not lost its power. In his *Émile* he demanded that children should be educated in freedom, and that their learning should correspond with their gradual psychological development. In this sphere, although Pestalozzi carried on his work, by precept in *How Gertrude teaches her Children* and (what Rousseau never did) by practice in his heroic schools in Switzerland, the new ideas have so far been confined to a few pioneers : in general, among otherwise progressive people, the barrack-school tradition of schooling is too hard to break down. Elsewhere, Rousseau had an overwhelming influence. He was in line with the intellectual critics. But, unlike them, he appealed to the emotions. "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains !" That is not an epigram ; it is a slogan. Rousseau stirred the hearts of men. He filled them with his own fire, and after him the French had a passion



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for the liberty and equality which he demanded. He changed revolution from an abstract philosophy to a personal need.

### THE AMERICANS PUT THEORY INTO PRACTICE

But even Rousseau sounded a little unpractical to Frenchmen. What he said was urgent, yet it might never happen. There was the King, there was the system, everything went on. Suddenly Frenchmen became aware that the revolution was actually taking place over in America. There, Thomas Jefferson, a young Virginian with a gift for oratory, was proclaiming doctrines which sounded very much like those which were spread from one *salon* to another in Paris. "No people ought to be taxed without the consent of their own representatives." Further than that, all men had rights which no Government could take away. Laws which violated the great general principles of justice and equity were no laws, and ought not to be obeyed. These doctrines were not only proclaimed; they were supported by bayonets and guns and scythes. The colonists repeated maxims of the more extreme republicans of the seventeenth century. Then they won the battle of Saratoga. The French were excited. The Government wanted revenge on the English imperialists, and agreed to the skilful persuasion of Benjamin Franklin: troops were sent out. So anxious was the French Government to assail England that it encouraged the Americans to preach in France, not realising that these doctrines had more than one application. Actually, the Americans were not so much conducting a revolution as defending liberties they were used to. They had had a big say in managing their own affairs since their foundation. The citizens of Massachusetts who resented the despotic actions of Charles II had pleaded for their liberties in much the same way as their descendants did in 1770. The pioneer objected to oppression of any kind. When

America was free, Jefferson and Jackson (the champion of the squatter) were to lead and organise successive assertions of their fundamental independence against the aristocratic elements in America itself. But the fact that the Americans had inherited their free habits did not prevent the French from applauding when they justified them. Lafayette and his soldiers came back ready to act as the Americans talked.

## ENGLISH RADICALS

It must not be forgotten that the Americans were not the only English people to protest against George III's despotic actions. Chatham had already sketched some of the reasons for dissatisfaction with English institutions. Burke, that lover of sound-established things, sympathised with the Americans' demand for rights. Wilkes, who began as a rake and finished as an alderman, outlined a programme which was later to be called Radical. Charles James Fox spoke eloquently in Parliament for some of the Radical causes. But the most important English thinker from our point of view was Tom Paine, a wild adventurous rebel, a link between America, England and France. His *Common Sense* roused the Americans: his *Rights of Man* defended the French. Although his main purpose—to reconcile his countrymen to the rightness of the Revolution in France—was a failure in competition with Burke's appeal to tradition, security and order, he played a big part in developing the new ideas and in adapting them for future legislation. His references to history may be slightly ridiculous; but his demands for removal of privileges, social legislation and practical equality were enlightened even for the eighteenth century. A man out of tune with his countrymen of his own time, he has received less than just treatment for his essentially right proclamation of the duty of decent Governments.

The searchings and questionings went into the economic order as well as elsewhere. Here, however, the effects came later and the writers must be dismissed briefly. The Physiocrats, among whom Turgot held an honoured place, attacked unjust taxation, and insisted that, as land was the basis of wealth, revenue for Governments should be derived from land. Adam Smith taught that the new industries would bring wealth to nations only if the old restrictions—toll-gates, customs duties, monopolies, and such—were abolished and men left free to manufacture and sell abroad in open competition. The doctrines of Free Trade and *Laisser-Faire* which were to bring such richness and expansion to the nineteenth-century Europe derive from his book *The Wealth of Nations*. But the effect of the new economists was seldom felt before the French Revolution and was not allowed to appear during it.

#### WHY THE REVOLUTION BEGAN IN FRANCE

The unrest of the late eighteenth century must be considered in an international sense, just as the *ancien régime* was a European institution. The French philosophers were read all over Europe; and other Europeans added their versions. Yet the Revolution broke out in France, and not simultaneously over Europe. There are a number of reasons for that. Some have to do with material conditions: the greater prosperity of the French trades and peasants made them more fit to move than their cousins elsewhere. But in the sphere of ideas, too, France was more fitted to be the scene of revolt. It may be that the outbreak of 1789 was largely due to accidents, in the shape of mistakes made by the Governments of the time. Even so, opinion was readier for revolution in France than anywhere else. There was a great volume of vocal discontent. It was concentrated on the criticism of one monarchy; and many of the servants

of that monarchy, whether in the army or the departments of government, were half or more in sympathy with it. The middle classes and the more enlightened nobles were ready to move. The peasants were ready to follow. The lawyers and journalists were ready to skirmish on the flanks.

In America most of the liberties which the philosophers demanded were already there: or at least there was a constitution which enabled them to be secured. It was only necessary for the Jeffersons to see to it that they were, in practice, secured. In England there was a radical opinion which was becoming more vocal and powerful. But there was no revolution. In the first place, Parliament provided a forum for the expression, and sometimes for the putting into practice, of the new ideas. Secondly, the effective benevolence of Pitt—who, with both King and Commons behind him, could almost be called a “benevolent despot,” and was certainly one of the best of them—took the edge off the country’s sense of injustice. Thirdly, the Methodist revival turned the attention of innumerable poor people away from the inequities of this world towards Heaven. Fourthly, and most important, the unity of discontent, so notable a feature in France, was here lacking. The middle classes saw the workmen crowding into the new industrial towns. They feared them. The English merchant, who didn’t suffer from the economic stricture and political impotence of the French merchant, forgot his enlightenment in the need to keep his workers at their submissive bench.

In Germany there was a spread of ideas which sometimes appeared likely to become as formidable as the French. Wolff and Lessing argued for religious liberty and enlightened government. Goethe and Schiller and Grimm were affected. The works of Rousseau reached Kant, the philosopher, at Königsberg, made him forget his customary afternoon walk and turned his thoughts to politics. Yet

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there was no revolution. For one thing, a number of the new theorists got on to thrones, of which there were so many in Germany. They didn't transform their States into enlightened ones (some of their attempts will be narrated in the next chapter). But they diverted the revolutionary zeal of the reformers by conceding some of their points. Again, the Germans were in many cases affected more in a theatrical than a practical sense. Instead of forming political clubs they wore coloured shirts. A number of their most important thinkers rejected the method of the great French critics. Kant, in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, insisted that other things beside reason must be taken into account. He was too much of an individualist to be a political force. He made the German enlightenment a vague ideal rather than a revolutionary movement. Moreover, there were too many differences of conditions in Germany for any united movement to become possible. Germany was stunned after the wars. There was not the unanimous direction of the discontent in France.

Thus the mind of the eighteenth century became hostile to things as they were. In many cases the emotions of men were stirred as well. A change was necessary. It remains to be seen, first, how certain rulers became aware of the new truths and tried to govern in accordance with them ; then, how, in France, where that was not sufficient, people took the matter into their own hands.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE RENOVATORS

THERE WERE SEVERAL KINGS of the eighteenth century who realised that the old government would not do. Some of them read the works of the critics. Some of them met the critics. Most of them, even if they were not in touch with the latest literature, became aware that new demands would be made of them. They could no longer govern as the absent-minded mouth-pieces of God. They must put their States in order. Those who tried with more or less success to do this have been glorified by the title of "Benevolent Despots"—though Lord Acton prefers to call them "Repentant Monarchs." It can be argued that both titles are flattering. The fact was that they realised that their States would soon collapse if they failed to put them in condition. Government was behind the times. Conditions were so bad as to be ridiculous. Business men were becoming powerful and discontented.

There were certain general lines on which most of these renovator-kings worked. To begin with, most of them tried to adopt the Richelieu machine of government. Some, like Frederick the Great, went so far as to introduce Frenchmen to act as intendants. Nearly all of them tried to unify their dominions, to impose a centralised bureaucracy, to systemise the laws. It followed that they took away the power of the nobles, where it remained (and where they were able to). Most of them also copied the bad French device of

keeping the nobles as privileged adjuncts to the court. It followed, too, that they did their best to abolish such self-governing institutions as survived. Most of them tried to conciliate the merchants. This they did partly by protecting their trade by the Colbert method—though there were some attempts in Russia to apply the methods of Adam Smith. They also relieved the merchants of unfair taxation, inconvenient dues, and restrictions on export where they could. In most cases they succeeded in preventing the rise of a revolutionary spirit amongst the middle classes.

#### ANTI-CLERICALISM

Finally, the eighteenth-century monarchs were anti-clerical. They struck many blows at the power and influence of the Churches. This was partly because the Churches got in the way of their absolutism. The Catholic kings in particular were troubled by this ; the Protestants usually found it easy to control their parsons. It was partly, also, because the Church offered a good target for their reforming subjects. The Church was, in many cases, corrupt and wealthy : it didn't do its work properly. Moreover the spirit of the age was one of tolerance : and most Churches were intolerant when they had the chance to be. This last generalisation does not, of course, apply to all the kings ; but some, like Frederick the Great, went to extreme lengths in religious *laissez-faire*. "Here," said Frederick, "every man must go to Heaven in his own way."

The most striking example of this anti-clericalism was the overthrow of the Jesuits. This body had done invaluable work of propaganda for the Catholic Church. But now there were no religious wars and not much religious zeal ; they were not needed. They had gained a big influence over education, in which sphere they imposed habits of rigid

training in opposition to the ideas of more liberal Catholics like Fénelon. They were a perpetual reminder to the Catholic kings that Catholics had two allegiances. In some countries they interfered too often in politics ; in some they went in for trade. The whole eighteenth-century temper was against their rule, their discipline, their missionary zeal ; and the comfortable bishops who had such close ties with Mammon were not likely to do much to save them. So they were attacked. They were expelled from Portugal—where they had been very powerful—from Spain, and from France. Eventually the Papacy, after making a stand against anti-clericalism, was pressed into taking the most notable anti-clerical step of all—the dissolution of the Jesuits.

At the beginning of the century the Papacy was combative. Clement XI (1700-21) issued the Bull *Unigenitus*, which supported the Jesuits against the Jansenists. But the Jansenists received much support in France, especially after the death of Louis XIV. The Parlements supported their cause. Louis XV was never able to suppress this opposition thoroughly : even his mistress, Madame de Pompadour, was friendly to them. Naples and Sardinia took up the anti-papal cause. Spain and Portugal followed. The three Popes who followed Clement XI resisted the movement ; but Benedict XIV (1740-58), a charming and admirable man, made a number of compromises. He tried to start a new Renaissance in Rome. He was admired by Voltaire and Frederick. He made concordats, or agreements embodying many concessions, with some protesting rulers ; he conceded rights of appointment and supervision to others. But his conciliatory temper only stimulated the eagerness of the anti-clericals ; and before the end of his pontificate Pombal in Portugal, Aranda in Spain, Tanucci in Naples and Choiseul in France were in full cry against the Jesuits.



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Benedict did nothing to defend them. His successor, Clement XIII (1758-69), showed fight, and identified himself with the order. France and Naples seized portions of his territory. Clement XIV (1769-74) was elected by a party of cardinals which favoured the suppression of the Jesuits ; to some extent, there is no doubt, they were influenced by the kings (Joseph II was actually in Rome). Clement had himself been attacked by the Jesuits : and, although he tried to postpone definite action against them, they didn't become more conciliatory. At length, in 1773, he dissolved the Order. The philosophers rejoiced.

### THE BOURBONS IN FRANCE

We can divide the rulers of Europe into families ; politics were more of a family matter than a national matter. The Bourbons naturally come first. They had cut the biggest figure in the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century they had wider sway, but less prestige. The main, or French, line was singularly undistinguished ; and it was catastrophic that the most complicated, subtle governing machine of all should be controlled by a lazy voluptuary like Louis XV and a silly amateur like Louis XVI. The only person who could be called a benevolent despot in eighteenth-century France was Madame de Pompadour, and she was not very benevolent. There were some good Ministers. Fleury was old but energetic. He strove, rather frailly, to stop extravagance. Choiseul was vigorous ; but his energies were mainly directed to foreign affairs, in ways already indicated. At home, he tended to pursue the line of least resistance. He was anti-clerical, because French opinion was anti-clerical. He was threatened with a first-class quarrel with the Parlements, the only semi-independent judicial bodies left in France. These courts, seeing the way the wind was going, had begun to resist

absolutism. They stood for Jansenism and opposed the Jesuits. Choiseul avoided an open quarrel. It came after his fall. The Parlement of Paris was expelled. It was recalled on the accession of Louis XVI in 1774 : for Louis was a conciliatory man. He began with a masterstroke. He appointed as his chief Minister Turgot, who by his writings and by his admirable work as intendant had demanded the respect of decent Frenchmen. At once a new spirit was evident. The Government economised—startling contrast to the last régime, which had proclaimed bankruptcy ! Turgot established free trade in corn throughout France. He threatened to attack privileges. That was too much. The court and the royal family, representing the decadent opinion of Versailles and hating the rising opinion of Paris, clamoured for his dismissal (1776) and the weak Louis let him go. It was significant that in eighteenth-century France a Voltaire could talk but a Turgot couldn't act. No revolutionary, Turgot was essentially a competent official : but that was too much for the French Bourbons. One other attempt to restore order was made, by Necker (1778-81). He was a Genevan financier, and knew how to borrow money on good terms. This made him acceptable to the court. But when he published a *Compte Rendu*, which, though carefully cooked, showed clearly the way in which money was wasted, the court got rid of him. They wouldn't have reform. They got revolution.

## THE BOURBONS IN SPAIN AND NAPLES

The Spanish story has better periods, though it ends tragically. Reform was begun by Elizabeth, Alberoni and Patiño. By them, Spain was made solvent, and the framework of a bureaucracy set up. The work was continued by the sons of the Bourbon Philip VI, Ferdinand and Charles. Curiously enough, both began at the same time. Until

Philip's death, Elizabeth dominated her husband in Spain and her son Charles in Naples; after that she retired, leaving her stepson and son to begin their leadership. Both of them were men of integrity, devotion and no great intelligence. Ferdinand was lazy, Charles energetic: Ferdinand's wife, Barbara, did much to supply the vigour which her husband lacked. From 1746 to 1759 Ferdinand kept Spain at peace. His Minister, Ensenada (1743-54), built a navy, but couldn't use it. He did invaluable work at home by the abolition of tax-farming, and economy; by encouraging agriculture; by simplifying the burdens on trade. Charles began to work in Naples in 1746. He had to deal with an unpleasant feudal nobility and a mendicant city population: his work had to be rudimentary, but was good. He succeeded his brother in Spain in 1759. He hadn't the same pacific tendencies, and joined in Choiseul's anti-British schemes, thus making it more difficult to balance his budget. However, his simple tastes and hard-working devotion earn our respect, if his genius never demands our admiration. His first Minister, Squillace (1760-66), raised a storm by being too hasty. His second, Aranda (1766-73), suppressed the Jesuits. Eventually he became too anti-clerical for the pious Charles, and was removed to an embassy. The greatest Minister was Florida Blanca (1776-92). With the help of an admirable subordinate, Campomanes, he established a bank, rationalised taxation, freed trade from ridiculous dues, made canals and other necessities. Unfortunately, this was only a beginning. A long succession of Charleses and Blancas might have made Spain prosperous. But Charles' sons were a proof of the unsatisfactory nature of hereditary monarchy. One was a complete idiot, and was shut up. The others, though not certifiable, were bad enough to undo their father's work. For a time Charles lived on through his Ministers. Tanucci

in Naples preserved the reforming spirit—though he was too busy attacking the Church to find time to attack other things. Eventually King Ferdinand came into his own, and ruled very badly. Florida Blanca remained in office until 1792. But in that year Charles IV entrusted responsibility to the egregious favourite Godoy. The French Revolution was to meet a Spain and a Naples where the efforts of some competent clerks had been made and wasted.

## THE HOHENZOLLERNS

The Hohenzollerns were more gifted than the Bourbons of this age ; possibly as gifted as any race of sovereigns in any age. Frederick William I built an absolutist State on the foundations laid by the Great Elector. His son, Frederick the Great (1740–86), was the most spectacular of the Benevolent Despots. It has already been seen that he forced Prussia into a place of greatness by his military brilliance (though this has perhaps been exaggerated by the mistakes of his enemies and the hero-worship of historians) and by his diplomatic unscrupulousness (though this has perhaps been minimised by people impatient of the moral restraints of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe). But Frederick's title to Greatness cannot rest simply on his counter-marches and Foreign Office legerdemain. He is described as a great ruler of Prussia. This claim must be examined with caution. He made his government more absolute and more efficient ; he made nobles no less than commons obey his will. But he didn't make his classes equal before the law, nor did he relieve his peasants of serfdom. He introduced French revenue officials, he paid his way : but he debased the coinage and imposed heavy taxation on the poorer classes without interfering with the privileges of the nobles. He reserved the commissioned ranks in his army for the nobles : he underpaid them. He abolished torture, but not

flogging. If his justice was stern, it was often capricious. He developed mercantilism to its uttermost lengths—prohibiting the import of Swedish iron ore when iron was discovered in Upper Silesia, establishing monopolies here, fixing prices there—but it is questionable whether he would not have done better in many cases to have followed the new doctrines of Adam Smith. He established banks; he financed industry; he encouraged agriculture. But he never made his working men prosperous enough to pay his taxes, buy his Government salt, cope with the high prices of his protected manufactures; nor did he succeed in saving his peasants from being expropriated by the big landowners. His was an “officers’ State”; the army dominated it. The individual was subordinated. His greatest glory is that he was tolerant. He allowed freedom of the Press, to a certain extent; he allowed religious toleration. He entertained Voltaire (and then was rude to him). He allowed liberal talk. He did not use force and terror to make people conform with his beliefs. But many would say that that was because he had no beliefs.

Still, he was a man of extraordinary ability. He was the greatest of Machiavellians—indeed, he was so much a follower of Machiavelli that he wrote a book against him. His successor, his nephew Frederick William II (1786–97) (whom he despised), was not a great man. His government was less harsh. He exacted less money, and had to borrow. The issue of the *Religionsedikt* (1788) showed that he would not permit the latitude of opinion which his uncle had done. He was a religious crank and a bigot. His comparative failure, and the greater failure of his successor Frederick William III (1797–1840), showed that Frederick’s Prussia could only be great when an unusually gifted man happened to be born into the succession.

## THE HABSBURGS

The Habsburgs, if less successful than the Hohenzollerns, were more heroic. Charles VI left his dominions in a pretty mess ; but Maria Theresa, who was the real ruler from 1740 to 1780, started on the work of improvement. In 1753 she took a step towards codifying and clarifying the laws. She restricted the use of torture. Her Minister, Kaunitz, who held office from 1753-92 (the office of Chancellor was created for him), managed to put the finances in better condition ; but for Austria that was an overwhelming task, since a large army had to be kept if the polyglot dominions were to be controlled. Towards the end of her reign Maria Theresa, who was essentially a conservative at heart (amongst other things, she opposed the general anti-clerical tendency of the age), found herself in frequent argument with her son Joseph (Emperor in 1765). Joseph, like his younger brother Leopold, was more liberal than Maria, more in touch with the spirit of the age. With difficulty he persuaded his mother to carry certain of his bold schemes. In 1773 Maria lightened the burden of the peasants. Some order was introduced into the taxes. But progress was slow until Joseph became sole ruler in 1780. For the next ten years he spent himself in a magnificent attempt to reconstruct his country. His efforts to improve its position in Europe have already been noticed. He was even more active in internal reform. His main objects were all in line with the liberal thought of the day ; unlike most of his contemporaries, he tried to put all of his theories into practice. First, he tried to unify his dominions ; to abolish their local self-government and divide them into " circles " which could be controlled from the centre. Secondly, he followed the precepts of the Physiocrats by attempting to impose a " single tax " on land, though here he was only

able to go a little way. Third, he abolished serfdom. Fourth, he attacked the power of the Church. In 1781 he issued the Edict of Toleration : in the next few years he closed the religious seminaries in order to get education under State control. Finally, he improved the judicial system, established fair and equal justice through his dominions, and abolished torture. A remarkable programme ! It aroused intense opposition. Unfortunately, Joseph was so autocratic that he annoyed progressive opinion as well as reactionary. He broke down the power of the Magyar aristocracy in Hungary, which was a reform. He revoked the *Joyeuse Entrée* of Brabant, which was an interference with valuable constitutional liberties. The Pope (Pius VI) visited Vienna in 1782 to remonstrate with him on his religious policy. Joseph had much justification for his attitude to the Church : yet in antagonising it he was losing the one connecting-link of his varied dominions. The Magyars and the Belgians both revolted in 1789. In Belgium there was the curious spectacle of a thoroughly conservative and clerical party, under Van der Noot, working with a liberal party to resist Joseph. The opposition was so fierce that he had to admit failure. In 1790 he was preparing concessions when he died.

Joseph was a failure : yet he was a glorious failure. He really did grasp the duty of an intelligent ruler, and he was not, like the other Benevolent Despots, satisfied with those reforms which caused no strife. He got at the roots of the trouble, and was not strong enough to drag them up. Yet in an age which was not prolific in heroic virtue he stands out as the one ruler who followed the lights of his reason without flinching.

He was succeeded by his brother Leopold, who had served a long apprenticeship in Tuscany. This State had suffered many generations of Medici misrule. Francis of Lorraine,

who got it as a counter in the exchanges after the Polish Succession War, made improvements: he introduced Lorrainers to act for him, and they knew rather more about effective government than the Italians. Leopold, succeeding his father, made his Tuscany a model eighteenth-century State, although he was hampered by having to supply Joseph with money and by having to be supplied by Joseph with advice. Leopold "was more of a Jansenist than a philosopher, whereas Joseph was more of a philosopher than a Jansenist." It is true that Leopold spent an undue amount of time and energy in combating the Church. It is true also that he suffered from a morbid fear of being assassinated. In spite of that he was a splendid ruler. His laws and his economics were both great benefits to the Tuscans. When he became Emperor in 1790 he had to face a crisis. He had to be cautious. Thus his two years of rule were filled with careful diplomacy and abandonment of reforms. What he might have done with more years and less distraction is an attractive question.

#### OTHER GERMANS

The minor German rulers are too numerous to classify. Some were good, some ineffable. The archbishops did little except resist the Pope. The Wittelsbachs didn't produce a good ruler until Maximilian Joseph, who became the ruler of Bavaria and the Palatinate in 1799: and his work falls outside our immediate period. The best Wettin was Frederick Augustus III (1763-1827). Not bothered with Poland, he did something for Saxony. The best governed States were Baden, where serfdom was abolished in 1781, and Saxe-Weimar, where philosophers were collected to produce an enlightened atmosphere. Goethe, that colossal bore, made it sound all very wonderful. The foulest ruler



was Charles Eugene of Württemberg (1737-93). The *Aufklärung* made muddled progress in parts of the patchwork.

#### THE ROMANOVS

The Romanovs kept to the path of Peter—that is, they held power firmly in face of great difficulties of geography and national temperament. Their main business was to govern ; incidentally, if it became possible, they governed well. The reign of Elizabeth (1741-62) was in the main a reaction. She got rid of the German officials ; she gave more power to the “nobility of service.” Peter III (1762-63), a stupid man, reigned long enough to save Frederick of Prussia from destruction and to grant special privileges to the nobles. His wife, Catherine, a petty German princess, with enormous ambitions, overthrew him, and ruled in his place (from 1763 to 1796). Her reign, in its foreign policy, was highly successful. We have already seen her successful wars with Turkey, Poland and Sweden, her successful diplomacy with Austria, Prussia, and England. Her government of Russia was ambitious but rather futile. She improved the machine of absolutism in the face of great difficulties. There were a number of serious risings against her rule, of which the biggest, that of Pugachev (who pretended to be the rightful ruler escaped from prison), gained much support from Cossacks and serfs and was difficult to subdue. She wanted to be more than an autocrat : she desired enlightenment. She read the critics : she kept up a correspondence with Voltaire, who professed great admiration of her. The only historical parallel to this is the admiration expressed by Mr. Bernard Shaw for the rule of Mussolini. In effect, although her precepts, and perhaps her intentions, were liberal, her practice was not so liberal. She wrote the *Nakas*, or “notebook,” a sort of Intelligent Woman’s Guide to Benevolent Despotism. It was so progressive that it was

banned by a number of Governments. It did not, however, represent the way in which she governed Russia. She called a great Legislative Commission, elected by the various classes of the community. It was permitted only to talk. (That was difficult, since the delegates from different provinces couldn't understand each other.) In practice, she did little in the directions indicated by the enlightened writers. She strengthened the power of the nobles by her "Letter of Grace." In particular she fostered the squires, who would be a bulwark of her power; she sacrificed the peasants to them, introducing serfdom where it had not existed before. She did something to improve the working of the law. She established certain forms of provincial self-government, in which the nobles had the power—again, a departure from the usual Benevolent-Despot method. She did something to develop trade and to create a middle class. But here her policy fluctuated uneasily between the current mercantilist theory and the new Adam Smith ideas. She left Russia stronger than she found it, and, probably, more efficiently governed. But she left most of the great problems for her successors to solve.

## GUSTAVUS VASA

The sovereigns of less important States must be dealt with briefly. In one case, at least, it is a pity: the career of Gustavus III of Sweden is one of absorbing interest, full of dramatic incidents; while of his courage and genius it is difficult to speak too highly. Before his succession he stayed in Paris; and he captured the heart of society by his charm, wit and intelligence. He went back to Sweden with French encouragement against the nobles in Russian pay. He succeeded in 1771 to a weak throne in a faction-ridden country. By his *coup d'état* of 1772 he secured a certain amount of power for the Crown. He at once set about

reforming the country. He attacked the evils which had grown during a long period of weak government. His economic and judicial improvements can only be referred to. His reorganisation of the army and navy fitted Sweden to take an important share in the European crisis of 1787-92. When he called a Riksdag (Parliament) in 1787 it was friendly. But at the next Riksdag (1788) he was resisted, especially by the nobles. He took bold steps, which were the more necessary as the Danes were invading his territory. He called on the peasants (or "Dalesmen") to fight for him : and the Danes were driven out. He appealed to the three lower Houses of the Riksdag against the first order (of nobles). To win them, he abolished the privileges of the nobles. He succeeded : he gained absolute power, and continued his resolute reforming government until his assassination in 1792. His work had a lasting effect.

#### BENEVOLENT MINISTERS

In some countries, where there was no enlightened ruler, there was found a Minister who filled the place. A notable example of this was in Denmark, where there was a curious alternation of slow and fast reform. First, there came the generous rule of the elder Bernstorff. Then for a short period the savage liberalism of Struensee. He maintained a brief power by his ascendancy over the King and Queen, in face of wide hatred. He struck quick and vigorous blows at the nobles, and almost overnight presented Denmark with an equitable judicial system. He was overthrown and executed. His work, after an interval, was carried on by the younger Bernstorff, who crowned a long period of benevolent government with the emancipation of the serfs, and by wise measures for the establishment of peasant proprietors which has made Denmark such a fortunate country in modern times.

## POMBAL

The last figure is one of the most striking : perhaps the greatest political genius of the century. Portugal was a misgoverned country. The Jesuits had enormous power, the nobles extensive privileges and influence. There was a colonial empire too big to control, too exposed to defend against Spain. There was the Methuen Treaty with Britain by which Portugal was at a disadvantage. Pombal gained the confidence of Joseph I by the brilliance with which he repaired the losses of the Lisbon earthquake of 1750. He ruled Portugal until 1777. The Jesuits, after a tremendous struggle, were driven out. Then Pombal attacked the nobles. Some were executed on charges of treason which were probably false ; the rest were cowed. Education was reorganised under State control. He founded 837 elementary schools. Sweeping measures were made to help trade ; restrictions were removed, new industries were started. He took in hand the problem of Brazil, where the Portuguese were coming to be hated. He made trade easier : he conciliated the Indians : he allowed racial intermarriage. His Government was of great importance in breaking down the barrier which had existed between the Spanish and Portuguese " conquerors " and the American born whites and Indians. But Pombal was overthrown on the death of Joseph I. His work, especially in Brazil, was evanescent. For one great statesman cannot make a progressive State ; and this end of one of the greatest eighteenth-century figures is perhaps a good commentary on Benevolent Despotism. It was time for the people to take a hand.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

ENOUGH HAS BEEN SAID to show that the necessary conditions for revolution were present in France to a greater degree than in any other country. It remains to examine the particular incidents which led to the outbreak. The attempt of Louis XVI to be a Benevolent Despot was ineffective. It is doubtful whether even a strong, resolute king could have controlled a country so ripe for revolution as the France of that age : Louis was not a strong resolute king. He abolished torture, abolished some of the remnants of serfdom. He appointed in turn Turgot and Necker as chief Ministers. But both he sacrificed to the whispers of the court : and there lay his failure. He was generous enough to make gestures to the people, weak enough to let the old gang cancel them out. He took no serious steps to reorganise the finances on a rational basis, and it was vicious finance more than anything else which fixed the date of the Revolution. Calonne, the successor to Necker, worked on the ingenious theory that, if the Government made a pretence of being wealthy and spent lavishly, it could borrow money on easier terms. He continued this disastrous rule from 1783 to 1787. After summoning the<sup>A</sup> "Notables"—a collection of privileged people who naturally suggested nothing that would interfere with their privileges—he was dismissed, and was replaced by Lomenie de Brienne, who was, if possible, a worse economist. At this

point the Parlement resisted the Government. They stood for conservative principles, and actually resisted some of the better laws of the King. But their attitude precipitated the crisis. In August 1788 the King dismissed Brienne and recalled Necker. The financial situation had to be faced. A second Convocation of the Notables had nothing to offer.

At this crisis the different people who stood by the *ancien régime* quarrelled with each other. The King wanted to attack privileges. The Notables and the Parlements would not have that, and resisted the monarchy. The summons to the States-General (1789) was an appeal to a third party to decide between them.

#### THE STATES-GENERAL SUMMONED

The States-General was a mediæval survival. It had not met since before the rule of Richelieu. The three orders—Clergy, Nobles, Commons—had voted *par ordre*; so that the Clergy and Nobles had had the power to drown the wishes of the Commons. Clearly, this system wouldn't provide the drastic reforms necessary in France in 1789, and Louis apparently recognised this by allowing the Third Estate a double representation. The elections were taken very seriously. They were free. The Press, which had begun to be outspoken in recent years, had a great influence. The lawyers and journalists, who had argued in the air for so long, now had a chance to do something. They saw to it that every grievance was ventilated. The method of election was indirect; representatives were sent to provincial assemblies, which, after much discussion, sent their delegates to Versailles armed with "cahiers" or instructions. These documents are illuminating. They are not anti-monarchical; but they attacked privileges, methods of taxation, judicature—in fact, almost all the institutions

of France except the monarchy. They are full of the influence of Rousseau, they assume that man has chains which must be removed. They have little to suggest in the way of practical, constructive steps ; which is not surprising, since few of their authors had had any experience in government. They had watched the government of others and found it wrong, but their remedies were general rather than particular. Their representatives were pretty faithfully guided by their instructions, showing the same virtues and the same vices.

The Revolution began with drama. The Commons made a stand which can be remembered as one of the brave blows for the betterment of the world. The Government met them without a clear policy, without a mind of its own. The States-General assembled on May 5, 1789. No Ministerial statement was made for them to discuss, and ratify. They had to make their own plans, and, it appeared, the Estates were to vote separately, so that the more radical schemes of the Commons would be put forward in vain. The Third Estate stood out against this futility. It declared itself a National Assembly, and invited the clergy and nobles to join it. The King resisted : eventually, he locked the Commons out from their meeting-room (June 20). They went to the nearest available building, a covered tennis-court, and swore not to separate until they had given France a new constitution. Their boldness triumphed. Three days later the King met the three orders and gave way to the Commons. The National Assembly came into being. The first round was won : there was no doubt that business would be done now.

#### THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The National Assembly consisted mainly of the Third Estate, with many lower clergy and a few nobles and



higher clergy. It was essentially a middle-class body. It soon became clear that the classes below were by no means unvocal. Nor had the court and the reactionary nobles been silenced. The Assembly was at once launched on a struggle on two fronts : to prevent the court filching from them what they had gained ; to prevent the lower classes from pushing them further than they wanted to go. The populace was already difficult. The *ancien régime* was collapsing, and with it order. The army—filled with American doctrines and angry at its poor pay—couldn't be trusted. The officials were conscious of a nerveless Government behind them. A hailstorm in July 1788 and a severe winter in the same year had spoiled two harvests, making many peasants destitute, while the bankruptcy of the Government had a bad effect on money transactions everywhere. Prices rose, wages didn't rise, unemployment increased. The people were seized with a kind of epidemic hysteria. There was panic, and loosening of control. Peasants did what peasants tend to do in emergency : crowded into the capital. National workshops were opened to give them subsistence ; more peasants were attracted. The Government, which might have stayed disorder by giving the National Assembly its head (for the bourgeois members of the Third Estate had no use for the rabble except to intimidate the nobles), acted stupidly, giving them provocation, without being assured of the strength to put them down.

For some days the court influenced Louis, persuading him to suppress the Assembly. On July 11 Necker was dismissed. Troops, under old de Broglie of the Seven Years' War, were collected at Versailles, and arrangements for a reactionary *coup* were made. The Paris mob heard rumours : they acted. They seized arms : they attacked the Bastille (the old prison which had held men arrested under *lettres de cachet*, by royal rescript without reference to the law, and

which was therefore a symbol of arbitrary rule ; its guns commanded a populous working-class quarter). They captured it and burnt it. This demonstration had a permanent and overwhelming effect. The Government caved in ; Louis came to Paris to explain that he meant well. Necker returned. The most reactionary nobles began to flee the country, to be pitied in fashionable drawing-rooms elsewhere. The Assembly determined to capitalise its success.

#### THE ASSEMBLY AND THE PEASANTS

The lead in these early moves was taken by a sickly, pock-marked aristocrat, Mirabeau, who had led a curious life of intrigue and adventure, and had now abandoned his class and been elected to the Third Estate. He wanted a moderate revolution, like the English Revolution of 1689. He tried to make the King work with him, so that crown and assembly should be in harmony. But he was too practical and moderate for the Deputies, whose enthusiastic idealism made them distrust this man who bade them copy institutions which had worked in England. He was too disreputable to win the confidence of the King. Thus the one man who might have led both King and middle classes to a triumphant new liberal France was neglected by both. A Commune of Paris was established with wide powers. The admirable Bailly became mayor. A National Guard was founded, under Lafayette, the hero of the American War. This body, which began in Paris and spread to the provinces, was a middle-class volunteer force, whose object was to keep order both among the working classes and the nobility. It was the guarantee of a peaceful, moderate reforming movement. When it was captured the extremists came in. The Assembly, having made plans for keeping order, then made a demonstration of its reforming zeal. On August 4 all privileges and feudal rights were swept

away, and a Declaration of the Rights of Man was made. The *ancien régime* had come to an end. The deputies, splendid enthusiasts, gloried in this magnificent break with the past, and some more liberal nobles renounced their rights with great solemnity. It was a noble and necessary gesture. But it didn't finish trouble. The working classes in Paris found bread difficult to get. The peasants got out of hand. They heard vaguely of what was happening in Paris, and the news of the taking of the Bastille seemed to mean that they could, and must, take action themselves. Curious tales were spread of "brigands" who, now that the Government no longer counted, would come and pillage them. The peasants took arms. They plundered the manor-houses. Sometimes they burnt and slew, but generally they were content when they had destroyed the landlord's title-deeds. Their land was now really theirs. This was perhaps the most stable change of the Revolution. Whatever Governments came afterwards, the peasants kept their land.

The old rulers made a last kick ; a banquet at Versailles was followed by a lot of wine and a lot of rudeness. The women of Paris wouldn't have it. They had been used to walking to Versailles to demonstrate. They now had their last walk there. On October 6 they brought the royal family and the Assembly back with them to Paris. Versailles was dead. The King ruled in Paris, at its mercy. It remained to be seen whether the National Assembly, which had used such dangerous instruments to kill its rival, could be that rival's heir.

#### THE MEN OF THE ASSEMBLY

In spite of the vigour shown by the peasants in the provinces and the mob in Paris, the Assembly, by its National Guard, provided for a fair show of order for two years. Time was given to establish a new constitution, to

which task the Assembly, now styled the Constituent Assembly, set itself. This is the first representative body with which we have dealt in detail in this volume. It was of overwhelming importance, because it represents the ordinary man making history for the first time. Its behaviour is in sharp contrast to the decisive action of some of the Benevolent Despots whom we have recorded. Yet, unlike them, it had clear principles. Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity were to be established in the realm. There was to be no privilege, no unfairness in the new country. Every man had his rights. But the very clearness of its principles was a handicap. Except in a few matters, it wouldn't compromise, and it was quite unable to settle the country in time to ensure order. It gave the extremists, of whom we shall speak presently, time to collect followers and take steps.

Modern democratic assemblies usually make progress through the party system. That is, an organised body of men, agreeing in their desire for certain immediate steps, work together to legislate in a certain fashion ; that party which commands a majority gets things done. Recent experiments have been made to improve on this, but, up to the present, it has been the most efficient means of expressing the popular will. The popular will, in so far as it had been communicated to the Deputies to this Assembly, was largely fulfilled by the actions of August 4. Now there were details to be worked out, and there were almost as many policies as there were Deputies. The result was delay, and delay was fatal. Often when the Assembly had to make a compromise it made it hurriedly and wrongly. Its actions were the result of the interplay of shifting forces, ephemeral conditions. There were a number of Deputies who were against sweeping reform. The most notable was Malouet, who had been an efficient intendant : he was

generally overruled. On the other side was a small body of men who wished to push Rousseau's doctrines to their limit. They became important because they alone organised themselves into an efficient party. They had their clubs, the Cordeliers and above all the Jacobins, their Press, their groups in other parts of France. Their early leaders were Barnave and Lameth ; but these men soon found that their associates were becoming too revolutionary and moved into opposition to them. The man who ultimately led this group in the Assembly was Robespierre, a little man with angular limbs, a provincial lawyer who so mixed ability and fanaticism that in spite of a lack of courage, commanding presence and oratory he became the man of the Revolution. He had once resigned an office rather than condemn a man to death. He was so honest, in a day when too many men were making big fortunes, that the Paris populace nicknamed him "The Sea-green Incorruptible." But his day was not yet. The great mass of members were neither revolutionary nor reactionary. They were there to be swayed. Of the many moderate leaders, Lafayette and Mirabeau competed most strongly for their allegiance. It was unfortunate that they couldn't work together. Lafayette was a heroic figure rather than a statesman. Mirabeau was a statesman rather than a heroic figure. He tried to work with the King, to rally King and Assembly to a moderate policy. He was always mistrusted by the King and often mistrusted by the Assembly. At most critical moments his advice was not taken. Towards the end of his life he achieved eminence on paper : in December 1790 he was elected President of the Jacobin Club, and in January 1791 President of the Assembly. But that didn't make him master. This adventurer-libertine was, oddly enough, the most responsible member of the Assembly, the least anxious to take wild steps. He could never, except in the early

destructive period, make his influence really powerful. He died in April 1791, too early to see his fears come true.

#### THE NEW GOVERNMENT

It is not surprising, then, that the work of the Assembly contained some magnificent innovations and some magnificent mistakes. Perhaps its biggest mistake was that it took too long. Some decrees were made operative at once. Some rules were delayed for months of talking. (The Constitution they were preparing was not offered to the King for his signature until September 1791. Two years is too long for a Constituent Assembly : much of the time was taken in going over old ground again and again. To emphasise its character as a popular body, the Assembly had invited the public to listen to its debates. The public, in spite of the National Guard, became noisy : it affected the tone of the debates, since delegates tended to address the galleries rather than the House, while unpopular speakers were in danger.

The weakest part of the Assembly's arrangements lay in its plans for executive government. The King was left at the head of the Executive. Ministers were to be appointed by him, and he was to initiate war or peace. But that Executive was crippled in all sorts of ways. The old France had been over-centralised. The new France was under-centralised. The provinces were broken up, and the country divided into departments, districts, cantons, and communes. That was splendid. But each of these little areas, except the cantons, had its own elected authority, which was in many ways independent of the central Government. Thus authority was weak. The Central Executive was hampered by legislative committees.

Following Montesquieu, the Assembly divided the executive power (the King) from the legislative power (the

Legislative Assembly). Against the sound advice of Mirabeau, the Assembly rejected the English solution of responsibility, by which the Ministry is chosen from the elected body and is, in the long run, controlled by it. The Assembly, fearing that Ministers might corrupt the legislators if they sat amongst them, made a law (November 1789) forbidding them to sit in the House. This rule was prolonged by the Constitution of 1791, and thus, for the whole duration of moderate government, Ministers were out of touch with the elected bodies. While, on the one hand, the Assembly pandered to popular opinion by weakening the Executive, on the other hand it thwarted it by imposing a property qualification on voters. The noisiest supporters were disfranchised. It rejected a proposal to have a second chamber—in which it may have been wise. The King was allowed a “suspensive” veto on the laws passed by the Assembly; that is, he could delay but not destroy them.

#### FINANCE

The new rulers were not better at finance than their predecessors. At first, Necker's Government had to live on borrowed money. Unpopular taxes, such as the *gabelle*, were swept away. Taxes were planned anew: they were to be mainly direct, and fair in their incidence. But the local authorities set to collect them had too little power, so that the Government was soon short of money. Yet new expenditure, such as the relief works and the free doling of corn in Paris, was involved. Eventually the Assembly tried to realise the wealth of the Church. In November 1789 a decree declared that Church property belonged to the nation. Paper money was issued in the form of *assignats*, or assignments of Church land. This was quite a good scheme, which might, if carefully managed, have put finance on a firm basis. But it was muddled. Too many *assignats* were

issued. Speculators were allowed to play with them and depreciate their value. Soon the municipalities were forced to accept them at their face value, while private traders refused to, which made local finance as awkward as national. Necker, who was hardly a sound money man, resigned in September 1790. He was followed by men still more unsound. By the end of the Assembly's rule the *assignats* had begun to lose their value. So many were issued that people lost confidence in them. The Revolution began with bad finance, which was to get worse.

#### THE CIVIL CONSTITUTION OF THE CLERGY

The Assembly's treatment of the Church was one of its most momentous steps, and one which has led to most controversy. The *cahiers* had contained frequent complaints of the wealth and slackness of the higher clergy. The strong anti-clerical sentiment which animated both electors and elected was given full rein, in this case led by Mirabeau, who for once was not cautious. The decree of November 1789, confiscating Church property, has already been mentioned. Tithes had been abolished on August 4. The Assembly undertook, on behalf of the State, the duty of paying the clergy. But the State was not only to pay them, it was to control them. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy, adopted on July 12, 1790, brought the Church completely under the control of the State. Bishops were to be elected. A further decree (November 27, 1790) forced the clergy to take an oath to observe the new constitution. The Church was deprived of its control of education. This was an ecclesiastical revolution. Though France had, since Francis I, been suspicious of too much Papal control, it had been Catholic; this was a flouting of all Catholic tradition. Many clergy refused to take the oath: many people refused to attend services organised in the State



Church and sought the illegal and clandestine ministrations of the dismissed priests. The Church was antagonised, and many of the peasants too. It is doubtful whether the majority of Frenchmen disapproved of the Civil Constitution, though it is certain that a great many did.

#### JUSTICE AND WORK

The rearrangements of the judicial system contained more virtues and vices. Feudal courts were killed: the Parlements were abolished. A well-organised system of courts was set up, with supreme courts for civil and criminal cases at Paris. Trial by jury was introduced in criminal cases. The fault was that judges were to be elected for short periods. They thus lost the standing and independence which would have made their decisions effective. This law tended, like too many others of the Assembly, to decrease order.

The economic arrangements were not particularly well thought out. National workshops were maintained for some time and then summarily closed. Customs duties on internal trade were abolished except for the Paris *octrois*. (Paris was too strong to be dictated to.) The old mercantilism was mostly retained. The Deputies were less well informed of the new economic theories than they were of current ideas on other subjects. They never quite made up their minds to break with the past. By nature they were reformers in most spheres: in economics they were mainly interested in maintaining the old order; so many of them were manufacturers and capitalists. They broke up corporations, guilds and traditional organisations: they would allow no trade unions, and striking remained a crime. Thus the Revolution, which did so much for political liberty, gave no lead towards economic equality.

## THE ASSEMBLY AND ITS ENEMIES

The work of the Assembly had faults enough. It was made worse by the behaviour of others. The court intrigued. Nobles were constantly leaving to join the *émigrés*, who were collecting arms abroad. The Assembly never quite knew whom to trust. The King was liable to revoke his concessions. On the other hand, the workers remained discontented. The *enragés*, or extreme revolutionaries, spoke and wrote in favour of further changes. The Jacobins extended their organisation and made plans for revolution. Between the *émigrés* and the *enragés* it is not surprising that the Deputies failed. Yet there was much that was valuable in their arrangements. Most of their destructive work was permanent. The evils they removed were erased from France, and the better part of the rest of the world soon wanted to erase them too. They made grand, often wild, attempts to set up a new order. Their mistakes were valuable lessons to progressive men.

Towards the close the Assembly seemed to have triumphed over its two sets of enemies. In August 1790 a mutiny of the army at Nancy had been put down by Bouillé. Order was precariously kept by the National Guards. On June 20, 1791, Louis (with his family) tried to get away from Paris, either to the army or to the frontier; he left behind a recantation of his concessions. He was clumsily disguised: he travelled in a huge coach. A vigilant post-master at Varennes, Drouet (whose son became Marshal d'Erlon), discovered him, roused the local National Guard, and caught him. The royal family was brought back to Paris. On the other side, the republicans tried to make a demonstration at the Champ de Mars on July 17. Marat, a vitriolic journalist, had in his *Ami du Peuple* roused a republican agitation. Camille Desmoulins

had stirred the Cordeliers Club. Danton, a coming popular orator, had joined in the cry. The Duke of Orleans, whose money and influence played a sinister and secret part in furthering the Revolution, plotted against his royal relative. Robespierre alone was equivocal : apparently he realised that the moment had not arrived. At any rate, the demonstration was held. Lafayette and Bailly suppressed it firmly. Danton fled to the country and Marat to the sewers. The Moderate Party seemed to be triumphant. On September 4 Louis publicly accepted the new constitution. The Assembly finished by a noble but ridiculous self-denying gesture ; a law was passed that none of its members should sit in the new Legislative Assembly. Probably Robespierre, who proposed it, thought that he and the Jacobins could control a set of new men from outside better than experienced men from the inside. The old Assembly held its last meeting at the end of September (1791). At the beginning of October the new Legislative Assembly took over. France hoped that violent politics were at an end.

#### THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MEETS

The Legislative Assembly, composed of men without experience in national politics (though many of them had served on the new local authorities) had to face difficulties which would have tried more seasoned legislators. Its composition at first suggested peace and moderation. Robespierre had succeeded in getting the property qualification for Deputies removed, but in spite of that the republicans were in a small minority. There were two groups of them. The Jacobins were dominated by their leaders outside. The Girondins—so-called because their most prominent figures came from the Gironde district—were the most vocal and enthusiastic group ; led by Brissot, a journalist of repute, including such orators as Vergniaud, and such schemers

as the Abbé Siéyès, and given social cohesion at the *salon* of Madame Roland, they went on their course of discrediting the monarchy. The conservative group was led by Barnave, Lameth and Malouet, who, after the affair of the Champ de Mars, had formed the Feuillants Club to defend the constitution : they tried to work with Lafayette. The mass of Deputies, as before, had no party allegiance. At first they followed the Feuillants ; but the superior debating skill of the Girondins, the superior craft of the Jacobins, and the mistakes of the Government tended to herd them into the revolutionary camp in spite of themselves.

The Ministry was in sympathy with the Feuillants. Narbonne, its most conspicuous member, after his appointment as Minister of War in December 1791, had counter-revolutionary possibilities. But the Executive, as has been shown, was weak. It was not responsible to the Assembly, and it was hampered by the executive committees which were appointed to watch its work. The Assembly soon began to put the King in a position where he had to oppose it. A decree of November 9, ordering the *émigrés* to return, was vetoed. Another decree of November 20, to expel the recalcitrant priests, was also vetoed. Every veto rallied more waverers to the republicans. On November 17, Pétion, the Jacobin candidate, was elected Mayor of Paris over the head of Lafayette : Paris could speak quickly ; Paris was now governed by republicans. The army could no longer be controlled except with the consent of the common soldiers : they had organised committees to speak their mind.

#### WAR BREAKS OUT

The collapse of the constitutionalists was due primarily to foreign affairs. Trouble had been threatening. The *émigrés* had collected in Germany, the more intelligent  
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under Condé, the more disreputable under the Comte d'Artois, the King's youngest brother. They had plenty of officers, if few privates. On August 27 the Emperor Leopold and Frederick William II of Prussia met the *émigrés*; they issued the Declaration of Pillnitz, stating that if all the other countries of Europe would join them they would interfere in France. Leopold was no reactionary; he did not intend to interfere—obviously all the other countries would not join. But the Declaration was felt deeply as an insult by public opinion in France. In November, seeing that Louis had accepted the new constitution, Leopold sent a circular to the Powers against intervention. Yet the *émigrés* made noises, the republicans made noises in reply. The Powers, even if they were not anxious to intervene, kept their contact with the *émigrés*. The Gironde demanded war. They hoped that it would lead to a republic. To the dismay of the Feuillants, Narbonne joined their cry. This was probably due to personal ambition: it certainly weakened his friends in the crisis. War fever was roused. It was so easy for the journalists to point to the enemies of revolution as waiting in camps along the Rhine. The only powerful voice raised against the war was that of the Jacobins. They saw that war would, in the long run, turn the revolutionary enthusiasm of the French into a nationalist enthusiasm, that a military hero would be liable to become more important than a wise legislator. Robespierre and Marat protested. They were futile. In March 1792 the King, giving way with his usual fatal compliance, dismissed his Feuillant Ministers and appointed Girondins in their place. Roland was Minister of the Interior. Dumouriez, an able, unscrupulous adventurer, was Foreign Minister. Now both Ministry and Assembly were for war; for by this time the Girondin orators had carried the House. On April 20 war was declared against Austria. The crusade against

despotism abroad had begun. This was a decisive point in the history of the Revolution. The war, henceforth, had first consideration. It so much directed the course of politics at home that at last France became a machine for war and nothing else. The prophecy of Burke, the great counter-revolutionary (who had told Englishmen that the Revolution would end in a Military Dictatorship) and the oddly similar prophecy of Robespierre, the great revolutionary, were to come true. There is a picture of Condorcet, the philosopher, who was proposing a scheme for remodeling education, when the business of war came on, swept him aside, and absorbed the energies of the Deputies in wild acclamations. That was symbolical of what happened to France.



## CHAPTER X

### WAR AND TERROR

THE IMMEDIATE RESULT of the declaration of war was in the direction of the Girondin hopes. The Legislative Assembly became weaker. The monarchy became discredited. The enthusiasm of the French people was roused against the foreign kings who were trying to take away the liberties they had so hardly won. It was not difficult for the agitators to link the names of the nobles, and of the royal family, with those of the invaders. Louis had declared war on Austria. But it could easily be pointed out that he was not to be trusted ; his vacillations gave plenty of evidence for that. His brother was with the enemy. Nobles had gone over, others were going over. Marat and the other journalists (for even the Jacobins who had opposed war were ready to make use of it when it came) could refer to a gigantic monarchist and aristocratic conspiracy, embracing the kings of Europe and the court of France. War fever became anti-royalist fervour. When the armies of France began to fail, as they were bound to fail, since the Revolution had completely disorganised them, the cry of treachery would be raised against the King. And there was another side to the agitation. Though the feeling of the French was becoming violently nationalist, it still had a world-revolutionary side—which, of course, was more pronounced among the leaders. They felt that other people were ready to revolt as they had done. They would help them. This



was particularly the case with the Netherlands. Military considerations induced the French to make their first attack there, and they were encouraged to hope that they would be welcomed. The revolt against Joseph II had had a revolutionary side as well as a clerical and reactionary one. After the pacification of Leopold many liberals had taken refuge in France. They gave the impression that their countrymen were anxious to rise again. From Holland, too, a number of revolutionaries who had been concerned in the agitation against the Stadtholder (which, as already narrated, had been suppressed with the help of Prussia) came to France to invite assistance. The Girondins felt themselves to be in the van of a world movement for freedom. They were enthusiastic and single-minded. They didn't organise a party, they hardly knew how to cabal. They pressed on to their rather hazy ideal, but they had no one in their ranks who could see all the difficulties in the way. During the spring of 1792 they controlled the Ministry and dominated the Assembly. But they managed the war badly; their invasion of Belgium failed, and soon the Austrian-plus-emigrant forces were threatening to invade France. They attacked the monarchy which they were pretending to serve. The Assembly passed decrees which the King could not possibly ratify. He lost popularity; so did the Assembly. The sentiment which the Girondins willingly roused against the monarchy turned against the Assembly. This played into the hands of more extreme revolutionaries, men who had been defeated over the war but were determined to turn the war situation to account. The Assembly voted for war. The Deputies found that the enrolment of an army was an easy way of providing employment for the masses who clamoured for bread. They didn't realise that, once you arm a proletariat, you can never quite tell against whom the arms will be used.

## THE FALL OF THE MONARCHY

On June 12 Louis at last dismissed the Girondin Ministers. Trouble was not long in coming. On the 20th a mob, partly directed by a hastily organised "Directory of Insurrection," invaded the Tuileries, where the royal family was lodged, and insulted them all. Lafayette came back from the frontier to organise a counter-revolution.

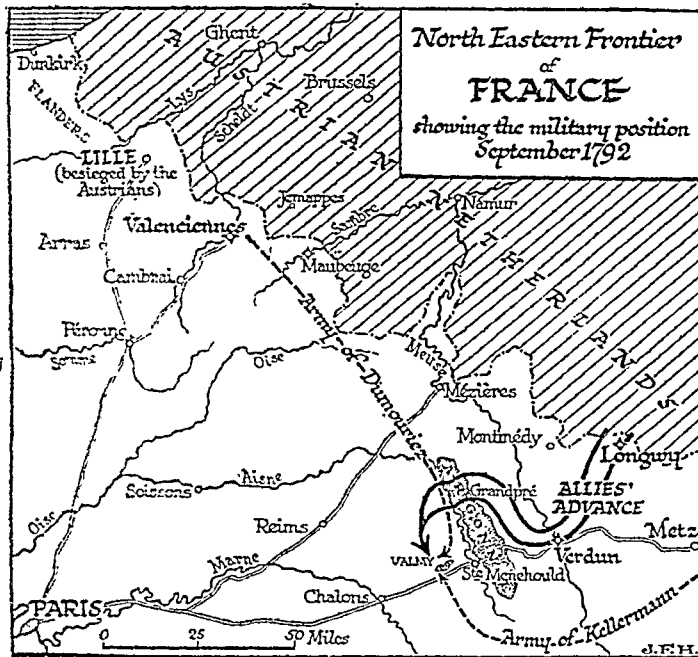
But the King would not trust him : he had not trusted Mirabeau, he had not trusted the Feuillants. His last possible supporter was lost. Lafayette failed, and got away. In July, Prussia declared war on France : and the Prussian commander, the Duke of Brunswick, issued a manifesto, in which he quite clearly announced his intention of putting down the Revolution. At the critical moment a large band of newly enrolled volunteers from Marseilles arrived in Paris. They sang their song, the "Marseillaise," which had been composed by Rouget de Lisle on the way. They didn't march to the frontier. They were used at home.

The Commune of Paris had, after various reorganisations, been modelled on a very democratic basis. The city was divided into sections : the sections elected their representative to the city commune, but didn't stop there. They tended to remain in session to watch their representatives and urge them on. At the beginning of August the more revolutionary sections were mobilised by the Jacobins. They overthrew the legal commune and established themselves in its place. They then armed all the supporters they could find, while they kept arms from the National Guard. Together with the Marseillais, they stormed the Tuileries, imprisoned the royal family, and overthrew the monarchy. The Assembly was dissolved. France was declared a republic, and elections hurried on for a National Convention. The invaders came on. Over the Rhine they came and

through the gap in the hills that guards the road to Paris. The hill-fortress Longwy fell and then the great fortress that is the way to the heart of France—Verdun—surrendered. The revolutionaries in Paris became panic-stricken. Paris was searched for arms. Suspects were hounded into prison. Roland and Danton were put in office, but they couldn't control the passions they had roused. At the beginning of September the mob, led by some of the less scrupulous agitators and unhindered by the more scrupulous, went round the prisons, tried the prisoners summarily, and massacred them. This outbreak horrified the world, though the extent of the killing has been exaggerated: not more than 1,500 were executed. It is difficult to excuse the revolutionary leaders for not stopping it: difficult to condone it even on grounds of policy. The work of suppression had to be done again later.

#### THE GIRONDIN ASCENDANCY

The Convention was elected, for the most part, without intimidation. It can be fairly stated that it represented the mind of France, although many people, tired of the ceaseless elections, stayed away. In Paris there was undoubted intimidation by the Jacobins, and Paris returned Jacobins. Elsewhere, in spite of their organisation, the extremist party secured few seats. The Girondins were also in a minority. Again, the great mass of Deputies had no definite party allegiance. They were pretty well representative of average French opinion—that is, they were republican, but not in favour of drastic experiments in social change. The first action of the Convention, after the proclamation of the Republic, was to declare that property was sacrosanct. This great collection of non-committal men was known as the Plain, in distinction to the Mountain, or Jacobin party,





who sat on the higher benches. France would be ruled by whoever won the Plain.

At first the Girondins had the ascendancy. Whereas in the Legislative Assembly they had been a revolutionary party, in the Convention they were the party which fathered restraint. They had gone as far as they wanted. (They became known as the "Right" from the position they occupied in the Chamber, while their adversaries were called the "Left" and the Plain the "Centre." This terminology has since been followed to indicate the different shades of political position.) For some months the Girondins made headway. The old rule, that Ministers should not be members of the Legislative, still held good; but Roland, Dumouriez and Pache, the chief members of the Executive, were their supporters. In September the revolutionary armies met the invaders at Valmy. The French showed wild enthusiasm. The Prussians showed none. The Prussians bombarded. The old French regulars stood still: their wild new comrades stood with them. After a farcical fight the allies retreated. The great military machine of Frederick had appeared—then gone away. On November 6 Dumouriez won the battle of Jemappes. Danger of foreign invasion was over. The French armies liberated the Belgians from their Austrian rulers; boldly the Convention offered to free all other peoples who were oppressed. What was equally important, Paris was secured. The insurrectionary Commune was dissolved. New, secret elections were held. Moderate men were returned; a Girondin—Chambon—became Mayor of Paris.

#### THE FAULTS OF THE GIRONDINS

But this success was not lasting. The revolutionaries, having gone so far, would not stop. Their following increased, as they were joined by all who were discontented

with their economic position. The Girondins could count on no such organised body of support. They were a clique of intellectuals and idealists rather than a party. They could only thrive on success. When they began to fail, they were found to have no basis. They talked of calling in the provinces to correct the predominance of Paris : they were accused of conspiring against Paris ; but in actual fact they never had such reliable provincial backing as the Jacobins. They were not united. Vergniaud was an orator but not a leader. Brissot was handicapped by the rivalry of Buzot. They met and talked at the pleasant parties of Madame Roland. She gave advice, which was usually wrong. They allowed themselves to be manœuvred into trying the King, and at the trial they were intimidated, by the Paris mob, into voting for his execution. Finally, they extended the war. In February 1793 they declared war on England and Holland. True, opinion in those countries had become strongly anti-French. Burke had written his *Reflections on the French Revolution*, and in spite of Paine's *Rights of Man* the English middle and upper classes were more and more inclined to intervene. Only a small body of Whigs, under Fox persisted in their welcome to the Revolution. But Pitt was pacific. The execution of the King, and the French successes in the low countries, made him take up a more threatening attitude. Since Valmy revolutionary armies had carried all before them. They proclaimed the " Rights of Man " in the Netherlands and went so far as to declare the River Scheldt open to the trade of all nations, in defiance of the treaty which made it a private river of England's. Even then it was the French who declared war. A coalition was formed against them : Spain and Sardinia joined Austria, Prussia, England and Holland.

## THE FALL OF THE GIRONDINS

At home, the Girondins lost their grip. They attacked Danton, who might have been a bridge between them and the less violent Jacobins. Roland resigned from the Ministry of the Interior. Pache deserted to the Jacobins, and was eventually elected Mayor of Paris. In the western district called La Vendée, where the peasants still adored their mass and their master, a royalist revolt broke out and could not be checked. Economic discontent became more and more vocal as the *assignats*—still being over-issued—declined in value ; for prices outpaced wages. Risings broke out in Paris and were with difficulty put down. On March 9, 1793, the Jacobins induced the Convention to establish a Revolutionary Tribunal, for the quicker trial of counter-revolutionary activity. This became a Jacobin weapon. On March 18 Dumouriez was defeated at Neerwinden. The French had to evacuate Belgium. Dumouriez tried to organise a force to march on Paris to support his Girondin friends. He failed, and deserted to the Austrians. Immediately afterwards, on April 9, the Jacobins persuaded the Convention that strong Executive action was necessary. The enemy were coming again. A Committee of Public Safety was elected to supervise the Executive. This was dominated by Danton and the Jacobins. Plans were made in Paris to overthrow the Girondins. They acted despairingly : a commission of twelve was appointed to root out the plots. It was too late. The revolutionary sections armed again. Once more an insurrectionary Commune was set up. With great difficulty, it made itself master of Paris. On June 2 the Convention was frightened into expelling the Girondins. The next stage of the Revolution had come.



## THE JACOBINS IN POWER

For a little over a year (from June 1793 to July 1794) the Jacobins held power. During that time they showed an executive genius which has rarely been equalled by any body of men, or by any one man. They were a small minority of the nation. They had to win the Convention to sanction their actions, they had to keep the army on their side, they had to use the unemployed rabble of Paris to serve their ends and then they had to suppress it. By remarkable ruthlessness, though no more brutally than many other successful rulers, they put down opposition in France, repulsed and defeated the armies of Europe, and sketched out the lines of reconstruction which Napoleon was later to make effective. Soon after their accession of power they issued the Constitution of 1793, a liberal, democratic, decentralised form of government which came nearer than any to the dreams of Rousseau. They were never able to put it into operation. During this year of power many schemes for a new social order, for new education and new economic policy were drawn up. They remained paper schemes. They were forced to get on with the business of keeping order and winning the war. Before they could settle France in the way they wanted to, they were overthrown, owing to the jealous dissensions in their own ranks, and still more owing to the reaction against their terrorism. Many, especially their great figure Robespierre, were averse from violence. They pleaded necessity. But the force they used recoiled on themselves ; and France had only time to glance at the new order they planned.

From the moment of the June Revolution, a strong Executive was in power. In theory, the rule that Ministers should not be members of the Convention was observed. But in practice the executive power was in the hands of the

Committee of Public Safety, which was responsible to the Convention. The Ministers were given orders by it, just as in England departmental officials are controlled by Cabinet Ministers. The Committee was, in effect, a Cabinet; for the first time real responsible government was established. The Committee wielded unlimited sway—so long as it had the confidence of the Convention. That was for a year and a month.

To begin with, the position was precarious. Lyons and several other cities refused to accept the new rule. The Vendéans were successful. The Allies were making headway. They were not so easy to deal with as they had been in 1792, for then both Austrians and Prussians had been pre-occupied with the partition of Poland. In July the French lost Valenciennes on the Belgian frontier. They also lost Mainz, which had been captured from its dozing archbishop in the previous year. Plots, Royalist and Girondin, abounded. In July, Marat, the Jacobins' best hack journalist, was stabbed in his bath (in which he had to live owing to a skin disease contracted in the sewers). The assassinator, Charlotte Corday, earned immortality by slaying a man whom most of the world detested. This was a reminder to the other leaders of the danger in which they lived.

They acted with incredible vigour. The first Committee of Public Safety, controlled by Danton, was superseded in July by the body which was later known as the Great Committee. Its members deserve mention. Herault de Séchelles, who was executed later, can be ignored. The other eleven were all men of outstanding ability. Robespierre, Couthon the cripple, and Saint-Just were the theorists, the intellectual leaders. Saint-Just, young and ardent, was full of paper schemes—for education, for the regulation of friendships. Collot d'Herbois and Billaud

Varennes were the organisers ; they, more than any others, were the directors of the Terror. (Terror was officially declared to be the order of the day in September 1793.) Barère was the Committee's spokesman in the Convention. Lindet and Prieur of the Marne organised the food distribution throughout France. St. André rebuilt the navy. Carnot and Prieur of the Côte d'Or built up an army. These eleven men changed the face of the world. They made the Revolution, or at any rate parts of it, permanent. They made Bonapartism possible.

The suppression of internal opposition was the immediate need. The Convention was invited to despatch representatives on mission. These men wielded extraordinary powers in the provinces. They crushed disaffection. To aid them there were the Committee of General Security, which organised police work, and the Revolutionary Tribunal. The Law of the Suspects (September 1793) arranged for the quicker trial of counter-revolutionaries. Large numbers of suspects were executed by the *guillotine* (which had been invented as a means of shortening the death agony). The insurgent cities were reduced, and ruthlessly put in order. The revolt in La Vendée was seriously taken in hand, and, for all the picturesque gallantry of the old-world gentry and gamekeepers who led it, was put down. The Queen was executed. Toulon, handed over to an English fleet, was recovered (in the autumn of 1793) by the skill of a young artillery officer, Napoleon Buonaparte.

#### TRIUMPH IN WAR

The army was built up anew. The credit for the earliest remodelling and revitalising of the forces is due to Danton; but it was Carnot who above all others made the great revolutionary military machine. Carnot it was who put into practice the *levée en masse*, the first attempt at conscription

in a large State ; Carnot who gave commissions to certain raw recruits who were later to become marshals ; Carnot who earned the title of " Organiser of Victory." He not only organised victories ; he won them. He travelled with fierce energy to the battle-front and told the generals what to do. The armies that drove the Austrians, English and Dutch over the rivers and past the fortified towns of Belgium were his men. They won, and became better as they learnt confidence. Soon the great army of the Sambre-et-Meuse was triumphantly bearing witness to Carnot's genius. Although they had to build almost from the foundations, the leaders of the new army had certain advantages, which they took. They had great enthusiasm behind them. Their men fought for liberty, and were better, man for man, than the more or less enslaved soldiers of Europe. Besides, they were not, like their enemies, restricted to the nobility in their choice of officers. Anyone, however humble, could rise in their new armies. They could draw on the whole nation for their directive talent, not on a small privileged class. Thus they staggered the world.

In September, Houchard, dealing with a dangerous Anglo-Austrian attack on the Channel ports, won the battle of Hondschooten, driving the enemy back into Belgium. The Committee was brutal with its generals : Houchard was executed for not following up his victory. In October, Jourdan, his successor, won a decisive victory at Wattignies. The Belgian front was now secure. The French were once more on the offensive. In December, Hoche and Pichegru attended to the threat on the Rhine ; the Austrians were cleared from Alsace. Successes went on ; in June 1794 Jourdan won a crowning victory at Fleurus, which gave Belgium once more to the French. Carnot arrived at the last minute, countermanded Jourdan's arrangements, and led the charge himself in civilian clothes,

with his top hat on the end of a walking-stick. The land war had been a great triumph. The new, untrained levies had not been formed into the customary line : they had advanced in columns, with clouds of skirmishers covering them. Their enthusiasm had overthrown all opposition. Only on sea was there failure. There, enthusiasm was not enough ; in naval warfare it is usually the size and number of ships that count. In 1793 the English Government had been dilatory, and had made little of its superiority. But on June 1, 1794, Lord Howe won a victory in the Channel that established English command of the narrow seas and made blockade possible.

#### BEGINNINGS OF REFORM

Meanwhile, the Committee attempted to construct. The codification of the law was begun. In this, and in the half-completed plans to organise education, revive agriculture, rationalise weights and measures and improve communications, they anticipated and prepared for Napoleon. They were in conflict as to what they must do to remove inequalities of wealth. Saint-Just was in favour of measures which would have limited the right to hold private property; his ideas in some respects foreshadowed the later doctrines of Marx, or Communism. But he could never win the Committee, still less the Convention, to his views. The Government did, indeed, move some way towards his ideal. Laws of the *Maximum* kept prices down. Individuals were forced, when needed, to work for the State. Wages were regulated. Crippling taxes were laid on the rich. The Government deliberately offered best conditions and best opportunities to the working classes : in this they anticipated the present-day rulers of Russia. But they had no time, if they indeed had the ability, to make this economic policy a success. They left trade dislocated, workmen refusing if

they could to work at the tasks assigned to them, everyone trying to evade their laws ; the possibilities of corruption were enormous, and the new officials were not chosen with such care that they could be relied upon to resist them. In economics, as everywhere else, the Committee applied the method of terror. Men who could evade their fierce orders did so.

#### ROBESPIERRE AND HIS ENEMIES

The Committee was not undivided at any time, nor did it rule without opposition. Its difficult ally, the Commune of Paris, was potent and noisy. Hébert, the leader of the Commune, had the sympathy of Collot d'Herbois and Billaud Varennes within the Committee. Towards the end of 1793 the party of the Commune appeared to gain an ascendancy. Hébert was loudly atheistic. Under his influence priests were persecuted. The worship of Reason was established in Paris. Communistic schemes were urged. Robespierre was determined to end all this ; he hated Reason as much as he hated Catholicism, and he believed in Private Property. For the time he allied himself with Danton, Desmoulins and other Jacobins who were more moderate than he was. In March 1794 the Commune was brought to heel, and a new Commune, full of Robespierre's partisans, was established. Hébert and his associates were convicted by the Revolutionary Tribunal and guillotined.

The Committee was now supreme. But Robespierre was angry with and half afraid of Danton, who was half a Girondin, and wanted to stop the Terror. The next move was to strike at Danton and his friends. They were tried and executed in April. Robespierre seemed to be master.

During the next three months he gave evidence of both sides of his nature ; the ideal and the brutally practical.

LR :

Deposing the atheists, he initiated the Feast of the Supreme Being. Dressed picturesquely, he headed a solemn procession to Rousseau's nameless God. At almost the same time he forced through the Law of the 22nd Prairial, to expedite the procedure of the Revolutionary Tribunal. Prisoners were to be tried in batches, and were not to be defended by counsel. The constructive ability of Robespierre was overshadowed by his mania for getting rid of his enemies. The revolutionaries—and particularly he—wanted order such as had never existed before. They became impatient and brutal when they couldn't get it at once. At the same time it must be remembered that no one was executed unless he was thought to be a traitor : and that the number of executions in France for treason during the Terror was not far in excess of the number of executions in England during the same period for petty theft.

#### ROBESPIERRE'S FALL

There were members of the Committee who hated Robespierre. Lindet was more moderate, and wanted the Terror to stop. Collot d'Herbois, Billaud Varennes and Barère wanted it to go further. They all hated Robespierre. Danton's fate was a warning. In July 1794—in the month of Thermidor, according to the new calendar they had established—these uncongenial associates plotted against Robespierre. Only Couthon and Saint-Just remained faithful to him. The Convention was roused. At the crisis Robespierre was wanting ; not a great orator, he made no impression on the Deputies who had had enough of him. He tried to raise Paris, as he had done before. This time the rising was put down. On July 17 Robespierre, Couthon and Saint-Just were guillotined.

## TRIUMPH OF THE "PLAIN"

But the victory did not rest with the plotters. They had raised the Plain. Now at last the Plain took command. It refused to be dominated by yet another set of conspirators. Before long the chief authors of the plot against Robespierre (they were known as the Thermidorians) were themselves arrested. The Plain consisted of plain men ; no one, except perhaps the intriguing Tallien, was conspicuous enough to be called their leader. They saw to it that the Convention resumed the power which had been given to the Committee. The strong Executive was dismantled. The duties of the Committee of Public Safety were given to a number of smaller bodies, which could be controlled. The Terror was at an end : prisoners in droves were set free. The tentative social legislation of the Jacobins was for the most part repealed. The Law of the Maximum was cancelled. In many other respects a reversal of policy set in. Priests were permitted to come out of hiding : the Catholic religion was tolerated.

The Jacobins, when they saw that the fall of Robespierre had become their own destruction, plotted. At the end of 1794 the Jacobin club was closed by the Convention. It seemed possible that a mild liberal rule would follow the Terror. Trade began to flourish again. The war continued to bring success. At the beginning of 1795 the French armies finally triumphed over the badly led Anglo-Dutch and Austrian armies in the Netherlands. Holland was occupied ; the Stadtholder escaped to England. The Dutch fleet was taken by a bold assault of troops across the ice. In April the King of Prussia, whose eyes had been on Poland during all of his fighting, saw that Russia and Austria were making a final settlement. He made the Treaty of Basel with the Convention. He was thus free to take territory from the



defunct Poland. In return the French obtained the Rhine frontier. In July, Spain made peace too.

#### COUNTER-REVOLUTION

For all its success, we cannot avoid criticism of the Convention in its last year of existence. So anxious was it to end the revolutionary insurrectionist movements in Paris that it allowed the younger members of the middle classes (the *Jeunes Gens*) to arm, and establish a reign of middle-class terror. The "White Terror" was as brutal—though its excesses have not been so accurately recorded—as the "Red Terror" had been. Paris was still in the grip of violence. The revolutionaries did their best; the outbreaks of *Germinal* (April) and *Prairial* (May) were almost the last great bids of the Jacobins. The economic system was by no means settled. Eventually, faced with these difficulties, the Convention decided to return again to a strong Executive. The members listened to the suggestions of the ex-Abbé Siéyès, the arch-designer, who had kept himself alive during all the changes of Government. (When someone asked him what he had done during the Terror, he answered proudly, "I lived.") The new system of government, the Constitution of the Year Three (their years began with the Republic), established a Directory of Five Men to control the Executive; a Legislature of two Houses—the Five Hundred, and the Ancients—a property qualification for electors and elected, and nominated judges. In distinction to the self-denial of the Constituent Assembly, the Convention ensured that two-thirds of its own members should be members of the new Legislature. Violent opposition was shown by the richer and more reactionary section of Paris. They organised a revolt in October, known from its place in the Revolutionary Calendar as *Vendémiaire*. The Convention allowed Napoleon Buonaparte to suppress the

revolt. A dashing young Gascon officer of cavalry, Joachim Murat, found some guns that the plotters had overlooked. He galloped to get them : brought them in time for Buonaparte, who, with his famous "whiff of grapeshot," scattered the rebels. The National Guards, and the mob, had often been used during the Revolution for political ends. For the first time the regular army was brought into the game. On October 26 the Convention came to an end.



## CHAPTER XI

### THE DIRECTORY AND ITS ENEMIES

THE FIVE MEN who assumed the title of Directors in October 1795, to wield very wide powers, were not a first-class lot. The ablest figure in the latter-day Convention, Siéyès, refused to take office. Of the Directors, Rewbell, perhaps the most striking, was an old Jacobin. Barras, whose good looks, ready wit, and lack of scruple made him the most influential, was an old trimmer. Carnot was a permanent official rather than a statesman. Larévellière-Lépaux was a Girondin and a religious crank. Letourneur was a nonentity. They lacked the ability to establish a permanent settled régime, which would incorporate the benefits of the Revolution. They took over many difficulties from their predecessors, and their rule was never sufficiently single-minded or vigorous to break them down. Trade recovered, but finance was not put right. Like their predecessors, the Directors were engulfed in the war. So much energy had to be given to it that other aspects of government were neglected. The Directors had no money to finance their colossal expeditions; accordingly, their armies had to live on the country they occupied, which gave their generals, independent of Directory finance, almost uncontrollable power. Throughout their time of office the Directors had to face the naval power of England. Their coasts were blockaded and their trade crippled. They

retaliated as best they could by excluding British goods from France. As yet they didn't control enough coastline to make this a deadly threat. They were handicapped by a ridiculous rule by which one Director, chosen by lot, retired annually. No one knew how long his tenure of power was to last.

Still, the Directors were not fools. There is no special cause for condemning them, no special cause for admiring them. That was their fate in France. There was no great popular movement against them, but there was no great popular following for them. Like the régime of Louis Philippe later, they appealed mainly to the middle classes. Middle-class support is often too tame to save a Government. The Directory was ultimately to fall to a cleverly organised conspiracy.

#### FIGHTING ENGLAND AND AUSTRIA

For two years (1795-97) the Directors were successful. A certain amount of order was established at home, and their armies gained remarkable triumphs abroad. During this time France was opposed by England, Austria and Sardinia; the last-named was early disposed of, leaving Austria to do the bulk of the land fighting, together with such imperial levies as she could collect. England did not repeat her inglorious military escapade, which had been mismanaged by the Duke of York, its royal and incapable commander. By borrowing money from England, the Emperor managed to put more men in the field than the French. While this was a remarkable achievement, it was not enough. Francis II, a coarse, honest and rather stupid man, was unable either to choose good generals or to organise a war-machine.

The French attacked the imperialists along three routes. The old Republican army of the Sambre-et-Meuse, now known as the Army of the Rhine, was divided into two

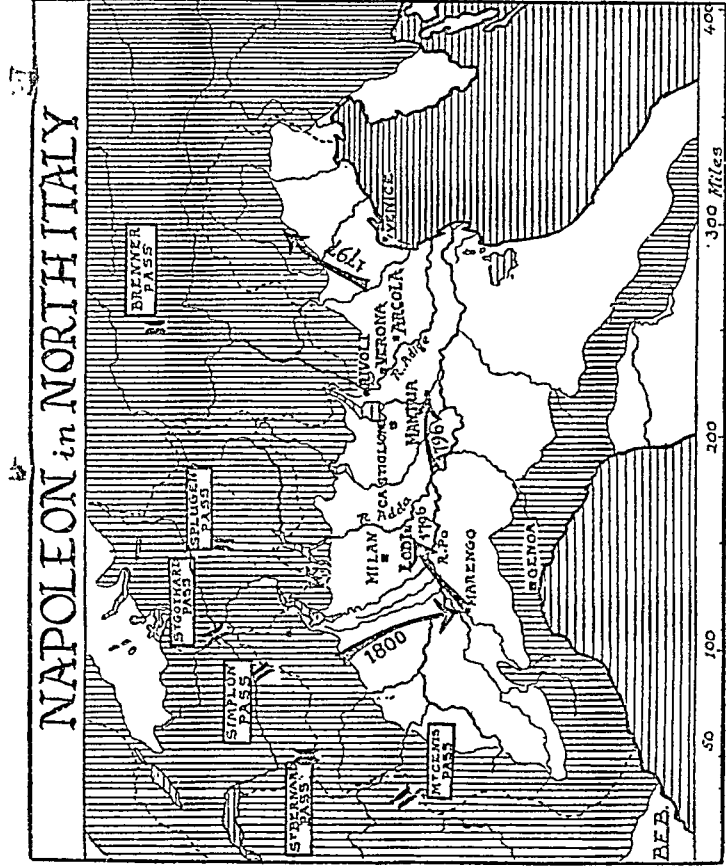
sections under Jourdan (who took the place of the disaffected Pichegru) and Moreau respectively, and advanced through Germany. A new and very ragged army, under Buonaparte, invaded Italy. The first two were not very successful. Jourdan, after some victories on the Rhine, got as far as Bavaria, but he was out-generalled by the Archduke Charles, the only really able Austrian commander, and forced to retreat. Moreau, who, though he was under thirty, had the reputation of being the greatest general in France, reached Munich ; but the failure of Jourdan forced him, too, to retire. His march back was masterly. It was unlucky for him that he could only boast of a clever retreat, when his rival, Buonaparte, was doing brilliant things.

Buonaparte had made a serviceable marriage with Josephine Beauharnais, a widow who had been the mistress of Barras. A Corsican by birth, he had assumed French nationality and changed the spelling of his name to Bonaparte. Through influence, he gained the command in Italy, which, as he saw, was the most likely to give good results, since the Austrians were weakest there. His troops lacked money and equipment. He promised them the plunder of Italy. He began his campaign with a stroke of genius. Moving along the coast (April 1796) he seized a position on the Maritime Alps near Savona where he could deal separately with Austrian and Sardinian armies on different valleys. By following a complicated but effective time-table he defeated his enemies in turn. The King of Sardinia was forced to make peace : he gave up Savoy and Nice to France. Bonaparte was left to deal with the Austrians, who could still outnumber him.

#### THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN

Bonaparte, as a general, was something new. He hurled his columns of eager, hungry men against the methodically

moving Austrian lines. His enemies were not prepared for his lightning moves, his concentration, his fierce charges. His subordinates soon knew the value of this odd little man who had been sent to command them. By a series of rapid movements he shattered the Austrian power in Italy. His forthright and lucky assault on the bridge at Lodi forced Beaulieu, the old and slow Austrian general, to evacuate Milan—which dominated north Italy. The Austrians then concentrated on the defence of Mantua—which evaded Austria. Bonaparte advanced and invested it. An Austrian army under Wurmser advanced by way of the Brenner Pass and Lake Garda to its relief. Then Bonaparte gave proof of his capacity for quick concentration and movement. Wurmser divided his forces at the lake; Bonaparte contrived to attack his divisions separately and defeated them. In this complicated warfare he had to trust a great deal to his subordinates. He had a number of good lieutenants available; they learnt to follow the little gunner anywhere. Wurmser, as a result of the battles round Garda, was shut up in Mantua with 20,000 men. In October another Austrian army, under Allvinzi, marched to the relief. Bonaparte attacked this army when it was in a strong position at Arcola. He was repulsed; but he quickly contrived a flank attack across marshes and fords, and drove Allvinzi out. In January a final Austrian attempt was made. Bonaparte met the new army at Rivoli, on the upper waters of the Adige. He held a sort of plateau against enemy forces operating from both above and below him. He drove off their attacks by clever concentrations, and finally defeated them so badly that Mantua had to be abandoned to its fate. It fell in February 1797. The Austrian power had been destroyed in Italy.







## CAMPO FORMIO

By this time Bonaparte was so successful, so much the hero of the French, that he could act as he wished. He moved about Italy like a conqueror. Lombardy was forced to send a heavy tribute to conciliate the Directors. He lived on the country with a vengeance : so much so that his men became devoted to him. In February he forced the Pope to make the Treaty of Tolentino, by which part of the Papal States, including Bologna, was ceded. Bonaparte continued to levy contributions, and with a queer kind of æsthetic piracy he sent the best pictures and statues of North Italy to be exhibited in Paris. Quickly he pursued the attack against Austria. Though he was checked at first by the Archduke Charles, he forced the passages of the Alps and advanced on Vienna. This movement, though isolated, settled the war. In April 1797 the Austrian Government agreed to the Preliminaries of Leoben. Bonaparte treated as though he were the autocrat of France.

Soon afterwards he picked a quarrel with Venice, whose territory he had occupied. He overran the country : and at the Treaty of Campo Formio (October 1797) Austria was presented with Venice to compensate for her losses elsewhere. A Congress was arranged at Rastatt to revise German boundaries. France was to get the Rhine frontier.

Bonaparte had already begun the reorganisation of Italy which illustrated some of the worst and best features of his policy. He had made the north of Italy send contributions to Paris. The French who followed him adopted the same policy wherever they went. On the other hand, the Italians were given new institutions which, on the whole, they welcomed. There had been no serious revolutionary movement in Italy. The influence of the new renaissance had resulted only in Romantic poetry. The people of Naples,

though Ferdinand wasted the work of Charles and Tanucci, were generally too feudal to complain. The people of Tuscany had had better government than they deserved or desired. The people of the Papal States had a lot of cardinals. The Milanese, though they were probably better off than anyone in Italy except the Genoese and Venetians, were the most ready for new rule. They undoubtedly preferred Bonaparte to Francis II. A republic was set up after the Treaty of Tolentino to incorporate the newly won lands—the Cispadine Republic. Another, the Transpadine, was established at Milan. These later joined in the Cisalpine Republic, which was given French governmental methods, and had many abuses removed.

In 1798 the French found a pretext for occupying Rome. A Roman Republic was proclaimed. In the same year they turned their attention to Switzerland.

Since the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) the Swiss Confederation had been recognised as independent. Its chief activity was to hire soldiers out to other countries. It was a loose federation of cantons, of which some were democratic, some oligarchic : Catholics and Protestants had kept a precarious balance. A disturbance at Berne gave the French a pretext for interference. Switzerland was occupied, and reorganised as the Helvetic Republic. Holland had already, on the expulsion of the Stadtholder in 1795, become allied to France as the Batavian Republic. At the end of 1798 Ferdinand of Naples, after hob-nobbing with Nelson and the English naval officers, sent his army to drive the French out of Rome. He succeeded, for a time. But the French, having driven out the King of Savoy-Sardinia to Sardinia in order to be sure of their communications, recovered Rome, pressed on and occupied Naples. Ferdinand had already been deposed by a little revolution. The French then set up the Parthenopean Republic (January

1799). The Grand Duke of Tuscany was deposed, and yet another republic set up there. Thus, by the early months of 1799, there was a chain of subsidiary States from the North Sea to the Adriatic. All of them had the advantage of cleaner, more efficient administration ; but they had to pay for it, in money and *objets d'art*.

#### THE BRITISH EMPIRE

At sea, things had been rather different. During the period 1795-97 the Directory controlled the French, Dutch, and Spanish fleets. The English had to blockade a great length of coastline : and they were handicapped by mutinies at Spithead and the Nore. They were chiefly due to the revolting conditions which obtained in the navy. Most of the sailors were either negroes or men recruited by the press-gang. They were badly paid, badly fed, brutally treated. The English merchant kings were not anxious to pay more than they could help for the safety of their trade. The crews chose a critical moment to make their demonstration, and for a time English sea-power was in jeopardy. The admiral blockading the Dutch fleet had to signal to imaginary colleagues to pretend that he had more than one ship. The Admiralty managed to stop the mutinies by a judicious mixture of slaughter and concessions ; the fleet was seaworthy again. The blockade continued. A Dutch fleet emerged, and was defeated at Camperdown (1797). A combined French and Spanish fleet was defeated at Cape St. Vincent (1797). Dutch and French colonies were annexed to the British Empire : Ceylon, the Cape, Mauritius. (In fact, the English extended their Empire unobtrusively during all this period, as a kind of profitable incidental of resisting the French menace. Convicts were sent to Australia in 1788 ; trade followed the flag. Lord

Wellesley (1798-1804) broke the power of Mysore and the Mahrattas, and made the East India Company the paramount power in India. Sir Stamford Raffles buccaneered successfully in the Malay region. In doing this, Pitt reversed his father's policy. He tried to conquer Europe in the Malay Archipelago.)

#### TROUBLE FOR THE DIRECTORY

Meanwhile the Directory had met trouble, and had successfully weathered it. Moderate Governments suffer from one severe handicap. They have the support of peaceful men, especially of business men who want to go about their business. But they incur the anger of both extreme sections, and extremists are apt to be more violent in attack than moderates are in defence. The Directors had similar difficulties to those which the Constituent Assembly had faced. Both Royalists and Revolutionaries were at them. The situation was further complicated by the fact that Rewbell, one of the Directors, could not forget his Jacobin past, while Carnot and Barthélemy (who had replaced Letourneur at the toss-up for places) had Royalist leanings. In the first year of its existence the Directors had to suppress a revival of the Vendéan rebellion, on the one hand, and a plot by the communistic Babœuf, on the other. In September 1797 the elections held to refill part of the councils resulted in the return of a large number of Royalists. The three Republican Directors acted boldly and illegally. They had the support of Hoche and Bonaparte, two of the three most notable generals. They collected troops; expelled Carnot and Barthélemy, who were replaced by sound and insignificant Republicans; purged the Councils; amended the Constitution—among other things, bringing the local authorities under the control of the Central Executive. This move (known as the coup of *Fructidor*)

made the Directors safe and strong for the time. Yet from this point their authority declined. Once they had begun conflict with the elected councils they couldn't stop. They had to make further purges ; they were constantly wrangling. The three dominant Directors, Lépau the Girondin, Rewbell the Jacobin, Barras, who was prepared to do anything which might make his fortune, were not good enough men to defend their Constitution. Lépau made unnecessary trouble by trying to establish his new curious religion of "Philanthropism," which was neither here nor there.

Catholics were persecuted to make room for it, anti-Catholics were not interested in it. Finance presented difficulties. The *assignats*, which had depreciated at an increasing rate for some years, became at last quite worthless. Paper money is only possible when people have confidence in it. The Directory had to declare itself bankrupt. Not only were there these special ills. There were other unsatisfactory features in the régime which had been present since it started, but came to be more evident when there were no successes to hide them. The Directory, established to keep order firmly, failed to stop brigandage. The Directors were very corrupt, and the corruption spread to their servants. There was something tawdry about their rule. Unimpressive men dressed in resplendent uniforms, drawn in gaudy coaches. France got tired of them, if not angry with them. But so long as their foreign policy was successful they were safe. It was their failure abroad more than anything else which overthrew them. Siéyès, who had already drawn up several Constitutions, was anxious to draw up another.

#### THE EGYPTIAN ADVENTURE

The first disaster for the Directory was the Egyptian expedition. Bonaparte demanded that they should give him

an army and a fleet to conquer Egypt, as a blow at England's communications with the East. Since Campo Formio, England was the only power left at war with France. English supremacy on sea and French supremacy on land had left a stalemate ; Bonaparte tried to solve it by an outpost attack. There was more in it than that. Throughout his career he showed frequent hankerings for triumph in the East. Constantinople appealed to his picturesque imagination. He didn't give way to his imagination except when it furthered his solid plans. At this point he probably saw that a resounding triumph would make him the most powerful man in France. It may be that this theory allows him more perspicacity than he actually possessed, and that he was merely lucky. He, at any rate, boasted that he " trusted to his star." On this occasion it helped him well.

Egypt was at this time part of the Ottoman Empire. Like some other parts of that Empire, it was practically uncontrolled by the Sultan. It was in practice ruled by the Mamelukes, a military order which had existed since the time of Saladin. Bonaparte set out with 25,000 men. He evaded the English fleet under Nelson. His army was successful in Egypt ; the country was temporarily conquered. At the same time that he established order, Bonaparte planned a Suez canal, and set scholars to unearth the tombs of the Pharaohs, thus beginning Egyptian excavation, and showing the curious streak of enlightenment that was mixed with his ruthless opportunism. But his triumph was incomplete. Nelson discovered that he had gone to Egypt, found his fleet at Aboukir Bay, and attacked it boldly. He put some of his ships between the French fleet and the shore. He was good enough to gain more success, even than his better ships and better gunnery warranted. Just as Napoleon, on land, could concentrate masses for attack at one point, so Nelson massed his ships to crush

part of the French "line" before the rest could come into action. The victory (August 1, 1798) was overwhelming. The French fleet was almost completely destroyed.

Bonaparte proceeded, for a time, on his wilder scheme. He marched to Syria. There, the Turkish writ ran. A Turkish force, commanded by an Englishman, Sir Sidney Smith, defended Acre against him. Since they had the support of a fleet and Bonaparte had to maintain his communication through a desert, they had an advantage. They effectively resisted his attempt to capture the town; and after sixty days he retired to Egypt. With difficulty, he settled a number of revolts there. But, thanks to Sir Sidney, who considerately kept him supplied with anti-French newspapers, he heard that the Directory was involved in a war in Europe, which was going badly. In October 1799 he left his army to its fate, once more evaded the English fleet, and arrived in France. After his departure an English army, with the help of the Turks, defeated his troops, who were eventually returned to France, in English ships. The Eastern adventure came to an inglorious end, but by that time Bonaparte had reaped the benefits of his victories, and he never had the discredit from his failure.

#### THE SECOND COALITION

The Directory had involved itself in another European war. After some abortive negotiations; Pitt remained hostile. Some attempts of the French to help the disaffected Irish were easily dealt with, and the English Government renewed its attempts to hire soldiers to fight France. The Congress of Rastatt went on. Talleyrand, a clever ex-bishop who had, like Siéyès, preserved his safety throughout the Revolution, was Foreign Minister to the Directors. He was the principal plenipotentiary at Rastatt, and he.

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played skilfully on German rivalries. The princes hated the French rule, but they were afraid of the possibilities of revolution in their own States. Thus they hovered in a state of uncertain hostility. When the news of the Battle of the Nile came through, most of the princes decided that France was now vulnerable. Paul, the eccentric son of Catherine of Russia, was annoyed at the French threat to Turkey, which he regarded as his own prey. The second coalition—England, Austria, Russia—was formed in 1799. Prussia was invited to join. But Frederick William III, who had succeeded Frederick William II in 1797, was more incapable than his father. He and his Minister, Haugwitz, preferred to watch Austria get into trouble. But, even without Prussia, the Coalition was formidable enough, since, in the absence of Bonaparte, France had to cope with English, Russian, Austrian and Imperial forces. To meet the crisis, the Directors established a system of conscription (which provoked risings in Brittany and Belgium) and imposed heavy taxes, as most of their plunder from conquered countries had been sunk in the Egyptian gamble. But their soldiers were untrained and their money was short. In the spring and summer of 1799 they suffered heavy defeats. At one end of their long line of defence, in Italy, the Austrians and Russians, under the savage, uncouth old Surovov, were too strong for them. Shérer was defeated at Magnano (April). Moreau was outmanœuvred by Surovov, driven out of Milan and forced back to Genoa (an ally of France). Surovov then defeated the French armies of Rome and Naples at Trebbia (June) and Novi (August). The Austrians at once assumed control of their lost territories, and put the other old rulers back. Those who had served the French régime were punished, and the French reforms abolished.

Further north, in Germany, Jourdan had advanced too

far from the Rhine. The Archduke Charles defeated him at Stockach and sent him back. Charles then went into Switzerland to co-operate with a Russian army, and drove Masséna from Zurich. So far, so good. But the Austrians and Russians were bad allies ; and at a point where decisive victory seemed possible, Charles led his forces off to the Rhine, leaving the Russians very weak. Masséna, a tall, dark, mysterious man with a long nose, a veteran of Italy, had waited in the key position of Switzerland for the enemy to make a slip. He gained reinforcements at the opportune moment, and in September defeated the Russians at Zurich. Surovov, hearing of the move of Charles, had started to the rescue, and had shown incredible courage in forcing the passes of the Alps against a strong French defence. He was too late to save Zurich. Meanwhile, in Holland, the ridiculous Duke of York landed with English and Russian troops. He was defeated at Bergen and re-embarked his forces. Thus, when Bonaparte returned, France was saved.

## BRUMAIRE

In France, the Jacobins had raised their head again. The elections of 1799 strengthened the Jacobin element in the Councils, and these bodies at once showed that they were not prepared to tolerate Directorial tyranny. Unfortunately, the most stoutly republican Director, Rewbell, had drawn the lot to resign. His place had been taken by Siéyès who was busily working out yet another constitution in his head. The Directors made a fatal move to incorporate Siéyès : at about the same time they suffered another disaster by quarrelling with Talleyrand, their ablest servant, who forthwith proceeded to intrigue against them. The Councils asserted themselves by the coup of *Prairial*, expelling three Directors. Unfortunately, they left Siéyès

and Barras, who were not to be trusted, while one of the new men, Roger Ducos, was a creature of Siéyès'. The Councils declared themselves permanent. It was an empty claim. Siéyès planned to capture the whole Directorial authority for himself. He needed a colleague with soldiers. He approached Moreau, who refused. With much misgiving, he applied to Bonaparte, who accepted. Talleyrand was in the plot. Barras was suborned. Several generals worked with Bonaparte. In November 1799 (*Brumaire*) they purged the Directory by a sudden display of force. Siéyès and his two friends forced the two remaining Directors, Gohier and Moulin, to resign. The move, thus begun promisingly against the Directory, was carried on as an attack on the Councils. The Ancients were quickly intimidated. The Five Hundred were more difficult. The deputies refused to be persuaded, Napoleon Bonaparte was shouted down, his claim to be the saviour of his country derided, he lost his nerve and fled. Luckily for him, his brother Lucien was President of the Council. By trickery he managed to quieten the Council; he then induced its own guards to disperse it. A rump of councillors declared that, for the safety of the country, all power should be surrendered into the hands of a Provisional Consular Commission, consisting of Bonaparte, Siéyès and Ducos. There were troops enough to ensure that the new régime would not be overthrown. To the masses Bonaparte was a hero after his Egyptian campaign: Bonaparte would renew the triumph which the Directors had clouded. It was soon evident that Bonaparte was not to be the tool of Siéyès. Rather was Siéyès made the tool of Bonaparte. The new Constitution established three Consuls. The first Consul was Bonaparte. The second was Cambacérès, a jurist who was told to complete the codification of law which the Jacobins had begun. The third, Lebrun, was a nonentity.

Most of the executive power was given to the first Consul. The legislature consisted of a Senate (controlled by the Consuls), an Assembly (which voted but did not speak) and a Tribune (which spoke but did not vote). The latter two bodies, powerless as they were, did not represent popular will. Their members were "selected" from elected lists. Only property holders voted. The local authorities were subjected to prefects chosen by the Consuls. This veiled autocracy was submitted to the French people for a plebiscite—the first of a series of controlled popular votes which have since become common. The French had to vote "Yes" or "No." No opposition could be organised. Critics were silenced. There was, of course, a vast majority for. It is certain that most Frenchmen were in favour of Bonaparte's rise to power : not so certain that the majority was really so overwhelming as it looked on paper. Bonaparte was now left free to repel the enemy and reap the fruits of the Revolution. The greatest experiment ever made in complete democracy had failed. France was in the hands of a man who knew no restraints save lack of opportunity; no common good which was not peculiarly his own good.

The peasants kept the land.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE RISE OF NAPOLEON

BONAPARTE, the First Consul, now set out on a career of military ambition which was to spread war over Europe for sixteen more years. He used the tremendous energy which had been released by the French Revolution. This energy was most potent in France ; but it was roused in most other countries of Europe as well. Bonaparte's triumph was largely due to the fact that he turned everywhere the discontent with old things to his own advantage. The discontented, revolutionary elements all over Western and Central Europe played a part in overturning old orders. In the long run many of these elements became angry with the new despot, but from 1799 to 1810 they mostly assisted in the increase of his power. Bonaparte was genius enough to make good use of the weapons there were to hand. He won, primarily, because he led new, vigorous forces against something that was old and effete. But new, vigorous forces do not triumph merely because they are new and vigorous. Bonaparte, and his generals, were such good strategists that they made the best of their equipment and their backing. The successes that were gained Bonaparte turned, first and most thoroughly, to the increase of his own power and importance. But he did more than that. Wherever he conquered, he introduced new, efficient systems in place of the old hand-to-mouth ones. The evils against which the French Revolution had been directed were removed, not

only from France but from most of Europe. It has been dangerous, since that time, to try to put them back.

#### TRIUMPHS OF THE CONSUL

This chapter will deal principally with the means used by Bonaparte to gain power up to 1807. In the next chapter will be given an outline of the system he established when and where the power was gained to establish it. The first thing needed, after *Brumaire*, was to resist the attack of Europe. He began well by coming to terms with Paul of Russia, who had found his allies selfish and unsatisfactory. Not only did Paul withdraw his armies from Western Europe. He agreed with the Consul that England was using her naval power too overbearingly, by searching neutral ships to discover whether they were carrying "contraband" of war to France. Accordingly, he persuaded the Scandinavian countries to join him in another Armed Neutrality, to resist this English naval dictatorship. The Russian serf owners were furious at this quarrel with their best customer. Before long they had their revenge. Denmark went further: she prepared to use her fleet in aid of France. The English stopped that. Nelson, cleverly disobeying orders, won the battle of Copenhagen in spite of the admiral in command of the English fleet. The Admiralty did its best to discourage genius by putting Nelson under the command of a regulation commander-in-chief, Hyde Parker. Thus Denmark had no fleet to use, and Thomas Campbell wrote a poem which every schoolboy used to know.

All this, however, was rather distant. Bonaparte's chief business, with Russia out of the way, was to defeat the Emperor. Although Francis II commanded Imperial as well as Austrian troops, he could never rely too much on

them, for many German rulers welcomed Bonaparte as an ally against Austria. Consequently, the Austrians, though they showed commendable perseverance, had very little chance of winning the war without allies. At the beginning of 1800 they held all northern Italy, including Genoa. Masséna had held out heroically until Bonaparte was ready : then surrendered the city when it was too late for the enemy to use it as a base for an invasion of France. Bonaparte moved quickly, rashly, and brilliantly. While the Army of the Rhine under Moreau guarded his communications, he crossed the Alps, imposing great hardships on his soldiers, and occupied Milan in the rear of the main Austrian army, which was near Genoa. The Austrians could have retired to their own country by a number of routes, without danger ; for central Italy was dominated by them. They chose to fight their way past Bonaparte. He stood to receive them across the bridge of Marengo. He had less than 40,000 men ; even so, he hardly expected the Austrians to attack him, and sent off large bodies to his right and to his left to hinder the enemy from escaping. Instead of escaping, the Austrians came right on at him and drove him off. His lieutenants, hurriedly summoned back, came in time to enable him to recover and triumph (June 1800). The Austrian army gave up north Italy, and retired. Bonaparte was acclaimed as a hero for this lucky victory. Actually, though he deserves little credit for it, it was decisive. Europe was struck by it—Bonaparte had come back, and at once France was successful ! Marengo was a potent battle, even though the French armies in Italy were soon in difficulties after it, and Macdonald had to cross the Alps in December to retrieve the situation. Meanwhile Moreau, after some very good manœuvring, met a superior Austrian army at Hohenlinden, and, by a brilliant flank movement, defeated it (December 1800). He advanced



along the Danube valley and threatened Vienna. MacDonald, in spite of his ordeal in the Alps, pressed on into the Tyrol. The Emperor gave way. By the Treaty of Lunéville (1801) Austria gave up what she had recovered since Campo Formio. France recovered the Rhine frontier. The Cisalpine Republic was restored, Genoa was recognised as the Ligurian Republic ; but the Papal States and Ferdinand of Naples were, for the moment, left alone. The Bourbon Prince of Parma received Tuscany : in return the Spanish Bourbon gave up Louisiana to France.

#### AMIENS

In England, Pitt, after a heroic and corrupt attempt to heal Irish discontent by the Act of Union (1801), had resigned owing to the intransigence of George III, who refused to agree to Catholic emancipation. The new Ministry, under Addington—a minor reactionary—wanted peace. There seemed no prospect of harming France now that Austria had retired ; so, although English public opinion regarded Bonaparte as a kind of glorified robber-baron, peace was made with him at Amiens (1802). England gave up her colonial plunder except for Trinidad (taken from Spain) and Ceylon (taken from Holland). Malta, which had been taken as an incident in the Mediterranean campaign, was restored to the Knights of St. John. The French acquisitions in Europe were recognised.

It seemed possible that Europe might settle down to peace. The Consulate had reorganised France successfully, in ways which will be described in the next chapter. There were, of course, Jacobin plots ; but Bonaparte had a first-rate Minister of Police, Fouché, who knew rather more about the conspirators' plans than they did themselves. France had extended to the Rhine and the Alps. The newly

incorporated lands were given better administration and better justice, and their inhabitants, especially the liberal section, found French rule an advantage after their former rulers. The Batavian, Helvetic, Ligurian and Cisalpine Republics had their laws and institutions modelled on those of France, which was an improvement. In 1802 Bonaparte made a concordat with the Pope, thus putting an end to the antagonism of the Catholics who were his subjects. By this arrangement, the Pope recognised Bonaparte's nominees as bishops, provided they accepted Papal authority. In the long run this agreement had unexpected results. By their submission, the French Catholics accepted Papal supervision in many matters in which they had been independent before. But, what was more important, this concordat (engineered by the Papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Consalvi, a politician rather than a priest) started the series of agreements by which the Papacy gained rights in certain countries and in return recognised other rights of their rulers and, in the eyes of the more progressive minds of the community, associated itself with despots and their oppressors ; with the result that liberal thought on the Continent had been driven to become atheistic. For the moment, however, religious peace was one more triumph for Bonaparte. The Senate appointed him Consul for life : the people, by a plebiscite, ratified the act. A French army (conveniently including a large number of Moreau's republicans) was sent to reconquer San Domingo, which had been run as a revolutionary republic by Toussaint l'Ouverture, a negro. The army conquered all the island, including a part which had not been French but Spanish, and conveniently died of fever. The German rulers who had had their lands shortened by Bonaparte recouped themselves by annexing Church lands. The Secularisations of 1803 removed all the ecclesiastical States

from Germany. Prussia gained heavily ; Bavaria, Austria and the other princes had a good deal to share amongst them, and where there was a shortage of episcopal booty they took free towns. The rule of the bishops was undoubtedly an anomaly, and its removal seemed likely to increase governmental efficiency, as well as compensate those who had lost to the French.

Yet the Lunéville-Amiens settlement did not last. England and Bonaparte were too powerful to live in the same world. Both had admitted grievances against the other, but the unadmitted grievances were the bigger. England's new machine-manufacturers wanted Europe as one of their markets. Too much of Europe, at Bonaparte's instigation, kept out English goods ; for Bonaparte, who encouraged the development of machines in France, wanted those markets for his own industrialists. He wanted outlets outside Europe. His agents infested Egypt, and little secret was made in Paris of his designs there. In defiance of the Treaty of Amiens, England kept Malta, and Bonaparte kept troops in Piedmont, Switzerland, and the Batavian Republic. In face of the claims made by the defenders of both sides, one has to admit that very little real effort was made by either side to keep the peace. There were two vast imperialist systems : neither would brook a rival.

#### TRAFALGAR

War began again in 1803. Bonaparte at once sold Louisiana to the United States. By doing this he renounced forever the possibility of western expansion ; and there are some who think he was unwise. However, he set himself to overthrow England. Money was raised from the subject countries, conscripts were collected from them and from France. The *Grande Armée* was built up on the remains of

the old revolutionary armies. Seven corps were established along a line from Hanover to Cherbourg. Recruits were trained. Guns, standardised by Marmont, the gunner-friend of the First Consul, were made. The ostensible objective was England. The arrangements were never properly completed, however, and it is doubtful whether the army would have sailed even if Bonaparte had gained command of the Channel—though he boasted that he only needed it for twenty-four hours. That he never got. The English Government made a show of preparing for invasion, by building a series of comic Martello Towers along the coasts; in reality it trusted to its navy, where Nelson was no longer impeded by decorative seniors. In 1804 the feeble Addington gave way to Pitt, who looked after the fleet and tried to buy allies. Bonaparte worked out a scheme for collecting the French navy and the subservient Spanish navy, slipping out of blockade, luring the English over the Atlantic, and returning to the Channel when it was unguarded. In 1805, after much waiting, the plan partly came off. The French did get out of Toulon and across the Atlantic, Nelson did pursue. But when they got back they found the Channel still guarded by Calder, and gave up. By this time European war was in the air. Bonaparte abandoned the invasion, merely stipulating that his navy, and the Spanish, should have a go at the English. They did, and were sunk at Trafalgar. Nelson, walking about in his decorations on board the *Victory*, was killed. He left English sea power unquestionably supreme.

## THE EMPIRE

Before Trafalgar, Bonaparte had taken a step forward in personal aggrandisement. The success of the Consulate had not been interrupted by the disaffection of extremists. Jacobin conspiracies were from time to time discovered by

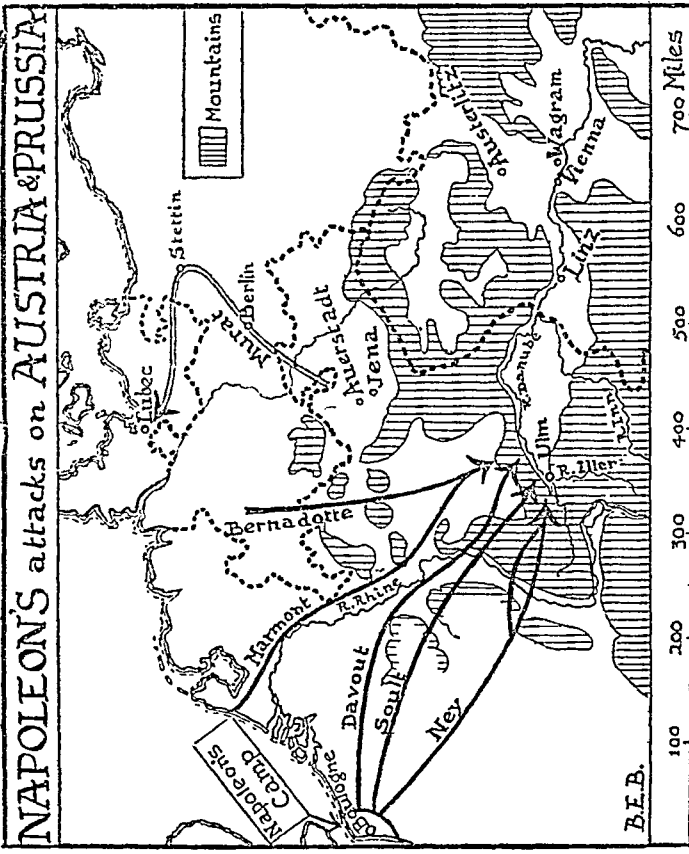
Fouché, who, it was said, had a list of men ready for seizure whenever Bonaparte was worried. On the other side, Cadoudal and Pichegru were concerned in a Royalist plot which failed. Moreau, who was disaffected, went to the United States. He was rather too big a man to be allowed in the same country as Bonaparte. It was suggested that the Duc d'Enghien, a young, frivolous Bourbon living in Germany, was implicated in the Royalist plots. Bonaparte, possibly on Talleyrand's advice, sent a force to seize and execute him. (It is interesting to notice the pained horror of historians at this "crime," in view of their casual treatment of Fouché's judicial murder of Jacobins on a large scale.) Having been violent to his enemies, Bonaparte consolidated his own position. In 1804 he became Emperor of the French. The country ratified the title by a plebiscite. It was an unsatisfactory step. Up to this point Bonaparte had definitely stood for something new and vigorous; he had been connected with the renascent movements which were purging Europe of its dross. Though selfish, he had at any rate been Citizen Bonaparte, First Consul of the French, whom he reorganised and governed better than any country had been governed before. He had made a settlement. War had, indeed, broken out with England, but he had at least a good case for arguing that it was England's fault. After 1804 he was an Emperor, with dynastic worries: he had a court and a nobility and an etiquette. In fact, he was merely another old ruler. More efficient, perhaps, and more enlightened. The best Benevolent Despot—perhaps the only Benevolent Despot. But still an Emperor, making his subjects fight and pay, pay and fight, for his glory. They liked it for a time, they liked the imperial court, the titles of nobility, the glamour of it all—it was a long time since a ruler had appealed to their Gallic taste for magnificence. But at last they got tired: especially when he lost.

## THE THIRD COALITION

The Emperor Napoleon the First soon showed his taste for acquisition. In May 1805 he crowned himself King of Italy at Milan. The Cisalpine Republic had already had its liberties curtailed ; now it was to be ruled by an autocrat. In June, Genoa was annexed to the French Empire. The Great Powers were stung into activity. Francis II had just abandoned the title of Holy Roman Emperor, and assumed the dignity of Emperor of Austria. He was, as usual, the most ready to take up arms against Napoleon, especially with English assistance in money. In Russia, Paul, more mentally deficient every year, had at last been assassinated in 1801. His son Alexander, who succeeded him, was ambitious and mystical. He early conceived the notion of rescuing Europe from Napoleon ; and in 1805 he fell in with Pitt's suggestion for a new coalition, adding a suggestion of his own that England and Russia should partition Turkey. (A similar suggestion had been discussed by Alexander and Napoleon, but had come to nothing.) Alexander had become more and more enraged by Napoleon's progress. As a supporter of "legitimist," or hereditary authority, he was angry at the expulsion of the royal families of Orange and Savoy. The Third Coalition was formed in the summer of 1805, and was joined by Ferdinand of Naples and Gustavus Adolphus IV of Sweden, two fierce but futile enemies of Napoleon. Prussia, though annoyed when Napoleon sent an army to occupy Hanover, remained at peace. Frederick William III and Haugwitz pushed caution to its utmost limits. Napoleon led them to hope for spoils. Bavaria and Württemberg were glad to see Napoleon strike another blow at Austria.

## ULM AND AUSTERLITZ

The Austrians advanced, one army under Archduke Charles into Italy, another under Mack into Bavaria. Napoleon this time left the Italian campaign to Masséna. The *Grande Armée* began to march. The seven corps moved quickly along routes mapped by the ugly little Berthier, that wonderful chief of staff. They had to cover greatly varying distances. Yet all reached the rendezvous on the same day. Mack, an untried man, led his 80,000 men to take up an advanced position at Ulm on the Danube. This was the gateway to the Austrian plain. Napoleon had to deal with Mack before the Russians arrived. His five-hundred-mile advance was so brilliantly managed that in forty-five days his armies had surrounded Mack. Mack stayed at Ulm until it was too late to get away : then he surrendered (October 1805). Napoleon advanced and occupied Vienna. By now Russian forces were in Moravia : the Emperor Francis with the remnant of his troops joined with them. Napoleon had had to send off certain of his corps in various directions. With rather fewer men than the other two Emperors, he advanced into Moravia to meet them. He held a position between Brunn and Austerlitz. The stern Davout, who took war seriously, looked after his men like a Frederick, and stopped looting, hurried from Pressburg to join him and hold the right wing. Bernadotte arrived from the north-west. The Allies were allowed to hold a strong position in the centre, the Pratzenburg. Thinking that Napoleon was weak enough to be attacked, they assaulted his right wing, hoping to cut off his retreat to Vienna. But the French, attacking in the centre under Soult, stormed the Pratzenburg. Leaving the left wing, which was strongly placed, to take care of itself, the centre turned and enveloped the allied troops who were forcing







back the French right. The victory, December 2, 1805, was complete. Francis at once asked for peace. The Treaty of Pressburg added Venetia and Dalmatia to the Kingdom of Italy. The Tyrol and other south German lands were to go to Maximilian Joseph of Bavaria, who received the title of King. Napoleon quickly pressed on with his reconstruction. The timid King of Prussia had withstood the bellicose advice of his Queen. At last he had plucked up courage to make demands, but Austerlitz made him pause again. Prussian envoys congratulated Napoleon on his victory, and for the moment Frederick William kept an uneasy peace. Pitt died. Naples was overrun, the egregious Ferdinand driven to confine his misrule to Sicily, where the English navy protected him. Napoleon's brother Joseph, a mild, generous man, became King of Naples. The Batavian Republic was turned into a kingdom for an even milder brother, Louis. Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden and the west German States which had not been annexed to France were formed into the Confederation of the Rhine, with Napoleon as Protector.

#### JENA AND AUËRSTADT

All these sweeping changes took place by decree in the early months of 1806. There seemed a chance of peace. Fox, who was the chief figure in the New English Government, had all along opposed the idea of fighting France; he did his best to make a settlement. But Napoleon was too confident to propose reasonable terms. Clumsily he offered Hanover to England and Prussia behind each other's backs. He had no scheme for compensating the Oranges and the Savoy. So that England abandoned the attempt to make peace, while Prussia made war.

The machine of Frederick the Great collapsed utterly before the impact of the more modern Napoleonic organism.

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The soldiers of Prussia still had their drill without their genius. They moved obediently on a battlefield as on a parade ground ; they followed orders and stood stupidly to be shot. Napoleon shot them, or drove a column through them. Advancing quickly up the valley of the Saale, he spoilt the methodical Prussian plan of concentration. He found one part of the enemy on a plateau at Jena (October 1806). Occupying the edges of the plateau at night, he attacked the Prussians the next day before they could concentrate. At the same time Davout, who was marching ahead, met a larger Prussian army under old Brunswick at Auerstadt. The Prussians were feebly led, and, though the infantry fought toughly, were defeated. Quickly the fugitives raced away over the country. Fortresses, held by officers whose only claim to rank was their noble birth, surrendered quickly. The remains of the Prussian army took refuge behind the Vistula. Blücher, by holding out pluckily at Lübeck, made himself conspicuous as the only reliable general in Prussia. Napoleon owed a lot of his success to the vigour with which he pursued a beaten enemy. Never before had there been a pursuit like this. Napoleon entered Berlin in triumph, and was welcomed by the people.

#### THE CONTINENTAL SYSTEM

In Berlin Napoleon struck a new blow at England by the Berlin Decrees. By this action he inaugurated the so-called Continental System, by which English goods were to be excluded from the ports of Napoleon and his vassals. In reply the English Government, by Orders in Council, declared that any country which adhered to the Continental System would be in a state of blockade. That is to say, if a port refused to accept English goods it could accept no goods at all. These rival policies were the logical development of the economic antagonism of the two Powers : they

had been foreshadowed by blockades and embargoes dating back several years. Quite apart from political issues, the two systems, the Napoleonic and the Imperial English, could not stand together. Napoleon visualised a Continent which would buy French rather than English manufactures. England, deprived of its markets, would starve for lack of money to buy necessary imports. The English, in reply, declared that Europe must buy English manufactures or give up her sea-going trade. The English navy was powerful enough to force the Continent to become an English market.

The results of this economic war *d'outrance* belong properly to another chapter. It is enough to say that the English, supplementing their economic policy, collected colonies from France and her allies. The Cape, abandoned at Amiens, was again occupied in 1806—this time for good. The conquest of the Mahrattas, suspended for the moment on Wellesley's recall, was completed under his successors. India was under English domination. The Napoleonic Empire made noisy progress in Europe. The British Empire increased more quietly at the same time.

#### EYLAU AND FRIEDLAND

At the beginning of 1807 Napoleon entered Warsaw, where the Poles, who had had old and close ties with the French, cheered him as the deliverer of their country. Unfortunately for himself, he did not take the opportunity of securing an eager ally. He might have launched the fervour of a nationalist Poland on the flanks of Germany and Russia. He did not: the Poles were disappointed. Leaving Warsaw, he moved to attack the Russians, who were rallying the scattered bands of Prussians that struggled to reach them. In February Napoleon came up with

Beningsen at Eylau. The two armies blundered into each other in the snow. There was little strategy or generalship : soldiers just hacked at each other. The Russian artillery did frightful damage. Napoleon was checked—and Europe gasped at this pricking of his bubble of invincibility. Beningsen (one of his abler opponents) withdrew and nothing was done to follow up the battle. Later on in the year Napoleon, collecting reinforcements, moved down the Alle to Königsberg, which the Prussians still held. Beningsen went along the other bank, slightly in front of the French. Suddenly, hearing that the French were dispersing, he crossed the river at Friedland to cut off their bodies separately. But Napoleon concentrated rapidly. Ney, “bravest of the brave,” one of the best men at a charge who ever lived, made a magnificent attack on Friedland. The Russians, having only one bridge by which to escape, were driven into the river. Königsberg fell.

#### TILSIT

Then Alexander made a remarkable change of front and came to terms with Napoleon. It is difficult to understand the motives of Alexander. He could be at the same time a religious fanatic, a defender of liberalism, and a most consummate intriguer. At this point his dislike of English sea power seems to have overshadowed his dislike of French land power. Again, he was attracted by Napoleon : dazzled by the vision of himself and another great Emperor settling the world. Some historians see in his advances to Napoleon masterstrokes of Machiavellian cunning—that he meant to use the French alliance for his own ends. Though this theory is difficult to believe in when we survey the evidence of Alexander’s general behaviour, it is supported by his record in the Near East. He had already suggested partition

of Turkey. In 1807, apparently, he resolved to sacrifice everything else to this plan. At the same time it must be realised that neither Alexander nor any other responsible Russian consistently held that Turkey ought to be partitioned. Kotchoubey had suggested to Paul that Russia would gain most, not by annexing parts of the Ottoman Empire, but by preserving its integrity in order to control it and influence it for Russian purposes. In 1798 an agreement had been made with Turkey, which safeguarded the trading rights of the Russians. In 1805 another Russian embassy had been despatched to Constantinople to secure a treaty which should "bind Turkey to Russia." The agreement of 1805 allowed Russian warships to pass the Straits—a privilege allowed to no other country. But this plan of alliance and control, which was to alternate with partition as the Russian dream for fifty years, had not worked. In 1806 an English fleet had bullied its way to Constantinople and forced the Sultan to agree to the principle of closing the Straits. This and other things induced Alexander to try for partition again; and he made friends with Napoleon.

The two Emperors met on a raft in the River Niemen, at Tilsit. No one else was present at that meeting: but the two rulers appeared to have found each other's company congenial, for afterwards they were most affectionate in public. They made the Treaty of Tilsit—to which Prussia was forced to accede. By it, Napoleon and Alexander were to divide the world. The Czar agreed to support Napoleon's Continental System, and to accept his régime in Germany. In return Napoleon acclaimed Alexander's Eastern schemes—though when Alexander mentioned Constantinople, Napoleon exclaimed, "That is the key of the world." However, Alexander made war on Turkey. Meanwhile, Prussia was forced to pay a huge indemnity, to

quarter a French army of occupation, to disband most of her own army, to give up her Polish and Rhineland possessions. Of the former, Napoleon built the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, which was given to his ally the Elector—now King—of Saxony. The latter formed part of a kingdom of Westphalia, to be ruled by yet another Bonaparte, Jerome. Saxony and Westphalia formed part of the Confederation of the Rhine. Sweden was still in arms. Alexander attacked Finland and Denmark also declared war on her. The Danish navy was again bombarded by an English fleet. But the Swedes lost ground, and eventually deposed Gustavus Adolphus in favour of Charles XIII. This King, having no heir, offered that honour to Bernadotte, one of Napoleon's marshals. Napoleon was not over-anxious for French commoners other than his own relatives to become royal. But he had to let the Swedes have their way, and Charles John, the new Crown Prince, adopted his new country to the point of disagreement with France. The sun of Napoleon was as yet undimmed. It remains to be seen what sort of a world he created.

## CHAPTER XIII

### NAPOLÉON'S RULE

NAPOLÉON'S SYSTEM was built partly out of old things, partly out of the Revolution, and partly out of his own invention. On the whole there was very little originality about him. Most of what he did was anticipated, sketchily, perhaps, by the revolutionaries, or had been done by monarchs in the past. He was good at carrying out old schemes by revolutionary methods, by which means he made them look like new. His chief original contributions to civilisation were made in spite of himself. If the French revolutionaries had, in a sense, restored ancient Athens, it was Napoleon's triumph to have reincarnated the Rome of the Cæsars—a centralised despotism, which brought better justice and greater security to its subjects than had been known before ; which regulated the behaviour and even the thinking of its subjects so as to increase its own power and efficiency, and did not allow dissent or independence when they looked dangerous. In these ways Napoleon gave Europe a short taste of a new Rome, except that in his interference with liberty of thought and speech he went further than the Romans had done. In the Napoleonic State the individual was completely subordinate. An irresistible machine of government moved along its appointed lines without regard for minorities or eccentric individuals. For the most part this system worked for the good of the great majority. It was supported by their



acclamations, until it became clear that it was being perverted to the personal ends of the Emperor. Then men began to protest against it. For some years the only objectors were, on the one hand, the vested interests which had been displaced, and, on the other, those who loved liberty more than anything. But an empire which set such store by the material benefits it conferred on its subjects—and many of them had to sacrifice more intangible goods to receive those material benefits—was bound to weaken when it gave its peoples not benefits but burdens. It can be argued that the Napoleonic system was broken by the hostility of England, since England would not allow it to live. Whether that be true or not, it remains certain that the Napoleonic rule began to fail when it ceased to confer the material advantages which were its stock-in-trade.

#### NAPOLÉON'S AUTOCRACY

Both as First Consul and as Emperor Napoleon was an autocrat. He was at the head of the Executive ; the Council of State, which carried out the routine work of government, was responsible to him alone. Local authorities were controlled by prefects and sub-prefects, who in turn were controlled by the Council of State. Thus Napoleon reverted to the intendants of the *ancien régime* ; the decentralisation of the Constituent Assembly was abandoned. The legislative power was, effectively, in his hands too. The Senate came more and more under his sway. The Tribunate, weak from the start, was abolished in 1807. The *Corps Législatif* was restricted to confirming the laws proposed by higher authority. Until 1810 the Senate and the Legislative Body accepted most of Napoleon's demands without demur. After that year opposition began to arise ; at first it was very inarticulate. Until then no voice was raised against the

conqueror. France, with a population of 28 millions, and lands newly incorporated in the Empire, with another 14 millions, were under his direct sway. The vassal kings, as will be seen, were almost as powerless as the French Senate. Europe west of Russia was as completely as it could be under the dominion of one man. Napoleon had the last word. But he was very good, in his early years at any rate, at encouraging initiative in others. During the Consulate the lawyers and politicians who had survived the revolutionary proscriptions built a new France. Napoleon listened to their speeches in the Council of State, learned technique of governing from them, fathered their schemes himself. His intuition enabled him to decide between experts and translate their plans into action.

#### NEW ORDER AND LAW

In many respects he used his power well. Perhaps the first thing that should be emphasised is that his administration was much more thorough than anything known before. Laws really were kept. Our modern conception of peace and orderliness in the lives of common men dates from Napoleon. His police were efficient in the same way that the police of a modern European country are expected to be. The mass of citizens of Napoleon's Empire could live without arms. They could expect to live their lives and do their business in peace : they had personal security. No Government had ever given that with the same completeness. Next we ought to mention equality before the law. There were no privileges, no feudalism, in Napoleon's world. As will be seen, he created a nobility, but it was for show rather than for use. His nobles had no exceptional rights. The relics of mediæval misrule—inequalities, injustices—were swept away. The lawyers, directed by Cambacérès, who set to work to codify the French law,

completed their work in 1804. They published the Civil Code, which was renamed the Code Napoléon in 1807. It established a clear and equitable system of law, which superseded the former confusion of Roman law, feudal law, and precedent. The Code was adopted by the vassal rulers, preserved and copied in many States after the fall of its inspirer. It is still used in Dutch South Africa and French Canada. It removed the worst abuses in the *ancien régime*. Some of its provisions had important results. In particular, the law which directed that a man's property should be divided among his heirs on his death has led to the multiplication of small holdings of land in France and some other countries. The peasant got his land at the Revolution. He kept it through the various changes of government. The new laws encouraged the growth of peasant proprietors, so much so that the peasant is one of the biggest factors in the France of to-day. And the peasants in their gratitude stood by Napoleon even after Elba.

#### FINANCE AND EDUCATION

At last finance was put right. The Consulate, by a carefully planned system of taxation, obtained enough revenue to meet its needs. The *assignats* were abolished, and confidence restored. A Bank of France was founded in 1800, and a great increase in credit followed. Until 1810 Napoleon paid his way. Indeed, a striking feature of the Anglo-French wars is the fact that, whereas the English debt at the end of the war was £900,000,000, the French debt was only £140,000,000. That is partly due to the fact that Napoleon financed many of his wars from the conquered countries. This latter fund, known as the *domaine extraordinaire*, was not included in the annual budget; it was controlled entirely by the Emperor. The rest of the revenue and expenditure

was voted by the legislative bodies, except for occasional taxes which Napoleon levied by decree. Tax-farming was abolished ; taxes were controlled by a bureaucracy with unheard-of efficiency. Towards the end of his rule Napoleon tended to increase indirect taxation, thus making the burden of the poor heavier.

One of the chief concerns of the revolutionaries had been to take education out of the hands of the Church and control it through the State. Unfortunately, they had never had time to work out a scheme and put it into operation, though many generous plans were made. Napoleon took over the duty ; he organised education on a basis of efficiency and subserviency to himself. At the head was the University of Paris, which was to be the highest rung in the ladder of State education and at the same time direct the teachers in other schools. Below it were the *lycées*, or secondary schools. These were unified and given the same grades and curricula throughout France. The control of elementary education Napoleon felt to be a too costly business ; in this respect he departed from his own slogan : " The career open to talent " ; for unless elementary education was available for everyone there could not be said to be equality of opportunity for rising in the world. However, local authorities were encouraged to institute elementary schools ; and many in fact did so. All educational bodies were to teach what the Emperor thought desirable. There was no room in French education for criticism, or for freedom of opinion. Learning became more widespread, but it was a stilted learning, which insisted on the infallibility of the Emperor and his rule. Imperial education was the most thorough system in the world, but it was designed to produce cogs for a great machine.

The illiberalism which marked Napoleon's system of education was extended to the thoughts and speeches of

adults as well. There was no liberty of the Press ; mouth-pieces of the Government were alone allowed to be printed. There was no liberty of political or economic organisation. No writer or artist of any kind was allowed to express himself in any manner that would conflict with the Emperor's power. Even such a damp revolutionary as Chateaubriand was expelled. The consequence was that art lacked all genius and inspiration. Writers degenerated into clerks and painters into decorators. A despotism, if it seeks to regulate what men think and say, must expect them to say and think things that are dull. Napoleon stopped literary independence more thoroughly than Louis XIV or Louis XV ; the genius that had appeared in spite of the earlier tyrants did not raise its head under the Empire. That was not because Napoleon was more anxious than the old despots to suppress irreverent brilliance ; it was because he was more efficient in his repression.

In religion the truce of 1802 did not hold. The Pope could not be expected to tolerate Napoleon's claim to control men's minds. He was eventually made a prisoner, and indeed treated very horribly by the Emperor who had desired him at coronation. On the other hand, Napoleon gave to every country he conquered the inestimable benefit of religious toleration.

#### GAIN AND LOSS

If Napoleon crushed the souls of his subjects, he looked after their bodies—that is, those whom he omitted to conscript for his armies. Roads and canals were multiplied. Public works were started on a large scale. The State made fine main roads over France and into the subject countries, over the Alps, by the St. Gothard and other routes, into Italy and Germany. Paris was given new buildings. The style of architecture was a copy from the

classical and Egyptian : both buildings and furniture of the Empire were massive and ornate. They were said to suit the Roman features of the Emperor. A great system of canals was established over France. The Government assumed responsibilities in this sphere which had never been assumed before. Industry and agriculture were developed. By his high protective system, Napoleon hoped to make France the great manufacturing country of the world. A great deal was done to build up textile industries : Napoleon certainly accepted the fact of the Industrial Revolution and acted accordingly. The silk manufacture of Lyons was revived. Jacquard's looms helped to make this city the Manchester of France. But, though the Industrial Revolution made progress, France lagged behind England in this respect. The real machine age came after the Restoration. Production increased ; at one point it became over-production, since the French and their Allies, heavily burdened with taxation for armaments, could not buy the things that were made. Napoleon's energy resulted in many ways in the enrichment of his people ; yet his military mania was a great and frequent impoverishing factor.

The material benefits received by his subjects were considerably modified by the tremendous drag of conscription. Men from France and the vassal States were constantly hounded into the army. Successive wars drained away the stronger, more eager recruits ; later levies had to take older men, weaker men, men who were badly missed from civilian life. Towards the end of his reign the loss in man-power began to be severely felt. And the men whose departure from civil occupations meant an economic loss made poor soldiers. In the end Napoleon was forcing men everywhere to kill each other when they wanted to be left at peace.

## SERVICE AND REWARD

It is fairly true to say that the Consulate (1799-1804) was a time of gain and the Empire a time of loss. Once he had acquired the title, Napoleon wished to be as royal as the oldest of royalties. Thus he instituted orders of nobility to serve as a buttress to his power. While he rewarded his best assistants, he was anxious to achieve respectability by surrounding himself with old families, so that republican upstarts jostled with *émigré* plotters in his receptions. The Empire acquired a tawdry gentility which contrasted badly with the fresh vigour of the Revolution. It goes without saying that the revolutionary calendar was abolished, and the republican "citizen" was no more used as a greeting.

Napoleon's rise was very largely due to his exceptional capacity for choosing great men as servants. His marshals flooded Europe with brilliant strokes of tactics. Masséna, Bernadotte, Ney, Marmont, Lannes, Davout, Soult, and Murat—Napoleon's brother-in-law—were a remarkable galaxy of generals. Berthier was probably the greatest chief of staff that ever lived. Talleyrand, one of the most amusing men of all time, was a diplomatist and statesman. Fouché was a superb Minister of Police. Yet in his imperial days Napoleon tended to alienate the better of his lieutenants. He was bad-tempered and overbearing, would not allow criticism, and had no sense of humour. He could not for long permit men of rival brilliance to flourish near him. Moreau went to America, and returned to assist the enemies of Napoleon. Bernadotte, in Sweden, turned against his early protector and helped in his overthrow. Talleyrand he treated badly: eventually, after Talleyrand had discussed (with Fouché) the succession, in Napoleon's absence, the Emperor returned to Paris, insulted him, and dismissed him.

Fouché called out the National Guard in an emergency : he was later dismissed for it. Talleyrand saw quite early in the Empire that Napoleon's ambition might ruin his power. As early as 1805 he strongly advised caution. His suggestions were rudely turned aside. Whenever he ventured to curb Napoleon's megalomania he was treated rudely. Eventually he got into the habit of communing with Napoleon's enemies, against the day when Napoleon should fall. After 1807 he was in touch with Alexander, and fanned his hostility to Napoleon. For years he conducted a secret correspondence with Nesselrode, the Russian Chancellor : in the long run he undoubtedly did much to overthrow the Empire. Fouché was often the subject of Napoleon's wrath, and certainly plotted against him on occasion. By alienating the friends who had helped him to power Napoleon gave another proof that he was not fit to wield that power.

#### SUBJECT STATES

The Directory and Consulate did their best to encourage other people to establish republics. The Emperor established kingdoms. The north of Italy was called the Kingdom of Italy ; the royal title was retained by Napoleon. Eugène Beauharnais, son of the Empress Josephine by her former marriage, was appointed viceroy. He was an efficient and generous man. He saw to it that the benefits of the Napoleonic system were extended to his new subjects. Unfortunately he had to extend the evils of the system to them as well—taxation, conscription, blockade. Thus, although he remained personally popular, he did not have the chance to rouse the permanent enthusiasm and support of the Italians. The Kingdom of Naples was ruled by Joseph Bonaparte from 1806 to 1808, and after his translation to Madrid the throne was given to Joachim Murat.



Joseph was a mild man ; Joachim was a fiery man. Both of them were unquestionably better rulers than any that Naples had had since the depths of the Middle Ages. They ruled humanely, and worked hard to introduce modern civilisation into this backward country. Again, they had to enforce taxation, conscription and the Continental System : for all their good works they failed to arouse a powerful feeling in their favour.

Louis Bonaparte, King of Holland in 1806, found himself in a similar quandary. He objected so strongly to the impositions he had to lay on his subjects that he quarrelled with his brother. In 1810 he resigned his throne. Immediately afterwards Holland was annexed to the French Empire, which was next extended to include the Hanse towns in north Germany, so that the mouth of the Elbe could more effectively be closed to English trade. These new French districts were thus added under unpleasant circumstances : the change of rule meant increased rigour, so that they resented the Napoleonic rule more than most. Westphalia, under King Jerome, Napoleon's youngest brother and his favourite, suffered from its ruler's lack of the usual Bonaparte ability ; yet its state was probably better than under its former petty princes. Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg and Saxony adopted Napoleonic reforms and introduced the Napoleonic law. Bavaria, under Maximilian Joseph and his Minister Montgelas, was very well governed.

#### EFFECT OF CONTINENTAL SYSTEM

Thus over the western half of Europe Napoleon, either directly or through his agents, swept away the evils that remained from the Middle Ages, and instituted new and efficient conditions in their place. At the same time he brought new evils. Taxation and conscription, to carry

# The EMPIRE of NAPOLEON about 1810





on his wars, have already been dealt with. There remains the Continental System. Once he had embarked on this desperate struggle with England, there was no staying his hand. For England would not give way. If English goods were to be excluded from Europe, every bit of coastline must be controlled by Napoleon. By 1807 he controlled the shores of Europe from the Vistula to Dalmatia, except for Spain and Portugal. Russia joined the Continental System in 1807. Sweden was forced to exclude English goods. Spain was willing to join the system, but Portugal was not. Accordingly, in 1808, French troops marched through Spain and occupied Portugal. The ruler of that country took what loot he could and sailed for Brazil. Napoleon then bullied the worthless Spanish King Charles IV, and his equally worthless son Ferdinand, into resigning their kingship: he made his brother Joseph king in their place. But his Peninsular schemes were unsuccessful. England would not allow her only entry to the Continent west of Turkey to be stopped. Accordingly, an English army under Arthur Wellesley—younger brother of the successful Governor-General of India who, as Lord Mornington, became War Minister—entered Portugal. Wellesley defeated the French general, Junot, at Vimiero. His senior officer, Dalrymple, arrived, took charge, and made the Convention of Cintra with Junot, by which the French evacuated Portugal with plunder. Meanwhile the Spaniards refused to accept Napoleon's casual overthrow of their dynasty. Guerilla warfare began which, with English help, was to turn into a long campaign.

The Continental System was the weak part of Napoleon's world. Although England suffered badly, she was better at this kind of struggle than Napoleon, especially when he had to rely on half-hearted support. His own industrialists found it difficult to manage altogether without English

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goods, and some of them had to be allowed licences to import them. With Portugal unconquered, there was an opening which could never be stopped up. Russia soon began to feel the strain : serf-owners and merchants began to press Alexander to revoke his adherence to the system. Napoleon was so much of a mercantilist that he could not bring himself to forbid exports. England was allowed to import corn from Europe—and thus at critical moments saved herself from starvation. What was perhaps worst about Napoleon's system, he did not allow countries whose trade with England he ruined the right to sell goods freely in France. France imposed a tariff barrier against her vassals. Thus Napoleon, while he made his satellite kings impose the rigour of a blockade on their subjects, did not bind them to France in a customs union—a form of association which has often led to a firmer unity. On their side, the English Government continued the blockade relentlessly. It involved them in a war with the United States (1812-14) in which they carried out some destructive raids, fought battles in single ships, and defended Canada, while the Great Lakes witnessed some fierce toy naval battles.

#### NATIONALISM

But economics do not completely explain the reaction against Napoleon. He brought into being the means for his own overthrow. He could not be defeated by the old kings and their armies, with English subsidies ; nor could he be starved by English ships. The reason why his cleansing of Europe met with so ignominious a reward is just that he did cleanse Europe. He established new institutions, through which ordinary men could make themselves felt without the handicap of feudalism. Yet he expected to treat this brave new world just as ancient kings like Louis XIV had

treated corrupt old worlds. He led Western Europe to expect efficiency, equality of opportunity, justice, good business; he gave them useless wars and shabby court ceremonies. He brought most of Germany under one authority; he did away with the old futile divisions, social and geographical. The unexpected result of his activity was to found a nation. He united a community; the community turned against him. Nationalism was created by Napoleon, its worst enemy.

The reforms he made in his own States spurred on his enemies to do likewise. It was difficult to get much done in Austria under the hard-headed Francis. Yet in the years 1805-9 Stadion did something to improve the administration, while the Archduke Charles reorganised the army. In Prussia, where the opposition to Napoleon was more bitter, the revival was more thorough. The better statesmen after 1807 saw that, if they were to win the devotion of their people from Napoleon, the feudal State of Frederick William III appointed Stein as Chief Minister. He was only allowed to hold office until 1808; then Napoleon, afraid of his ability, forced him to go. Stein inaugurated the renaissance of Prussia. Feudalism was abolished. It was made possible for commoners to rise in the army and the State. Humboldt organised a system of State education. Scharnhorst had only a small army to play with. By passing recruits through it quickly he had a large number of men ready to take up arms. The youth of Prussia were encouraged to form secret societies and to develop hate against Napoleon. The work of Stein was carried on in a minor key by Hardenburg. The people, smarting under their bad treatment by the French, drilled themselves into a state of organised fury. Germans were resentful and became fiercely militarist, as after 1918. Napoleon found

more enemies here than he or his republican predecessors had found before. Formerly, the opponents had been kings and their feudal nobility. Now it was a people.

In 1808 the power of the Emperor seemed to be invincible. There was a rising in Spain—but it could be dealt with. Napoleon and Alexander met at Erfurt, the subject kings came to be polite. The two Emperors discussed their common problems, and finished by vowing eternal friendship. Goethe and the other German *littérateurs* were flattered by Napoleon's kind and intelligent appreciation. But at the same time Talleyrand held secret interviews with Alexander, telling him that Napoleon now represented Napoleon and not France. Alexander listened and was impressed. The English cruisers kept up their war on neutral ships trading with Napoleon's ports. Booksellers in Prussia were surreptitiously distributing pamphlets against the tyranny of the French. And there was a Spanish rising.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE FALL OF NAPOLEON

IN 1808 THERE WAS TROUBLE in the Peninsula. Spain had been an ally of the French since 1795. The effete Charles IV was still on the throne, and his favourite Godoy, Prince of the Peace, ruled the country as badly as ever. Portugal, that old business friend of England, refused to join in the Continental System. She had to be coerced. Detachments of the *Grande Armée* were brought back across Europe, from the places they were occupying, in Germany and Central Europe ; Napoleon was given permission to send them through Spain to Portugal. The commander, Junot, soon found that there were no Portuguese to fight. The Regent, taking as much of the national treasure as he could lay hands on, decamped under the protection of English warships to Brazil. But this invasion was a little too much for the English Government. Though, after the failure of the Duke of York, it had been decided that no more military adventures should be undertaken, the loss of such a good customer as Portugal seemed to justify the creation of a new precedent. Therefore an expeditionary force was sent to Portugal under the command of Sir Arthur Wellesley. The English soldiers might be drawn from the dregs of the population (Wellesley, on seeing a batch of new recruits, once said : " I don't know what the enemy will think of these men, but, by God, they frighten me ! " ), but they had been trained pretty thoroughly in the use of their muskets.



They were neither eager volunteers rushing to the defence of their country nor conscripts brought in for an emergency. They were a highly professionalised, mercenary army. The French had the unpleasant experience of meeting the English musket-fire, which was steadier than anything the French had been used to. The English won the battle of Vimiero. Junot was forced to agree to the Convention of Cintra, by which he evacuated Portugal with his baggage (which meant his loot). Something had to be done about this.

#### SPAIN PROVOKED

Meanwhile, Napoleon had seized this opportunity to interfere in Spain. The troops which marched through the gaps in the Pyrenees were far more than were needed for the conquest of Portugal. Some of them went to Barcelona, which was not on the right road at all. Napoleon invited Charles IV and his son, Ferdinand, to Bayonne. He bullied Charles into abdicating in favour of Ferdinand. He then threatened to shoot Ferdinand unless he resigned his rights too. The Spanish throne was vacant. Murat led the French armies into Madrid. He longed for the prize of the Spanish throne himself. He wore several new uniforms, put ostrich feathers in his hat, and dazzled the good Spaniards. But Napoleon, unfortunately for himself, brought his good-natured brother Joseph from Naples to rule Spain, while Murat, who would have revelled in the heavy work of subduing a difficult country, was transferred to Naples.

This annexation was a more blatant piece of aggrandisement than anything Napoleon had yet done. His previous acquisitions had been preceded by some kind of justification : this had none. It did not avail that Joseph was a much better ruler than any the Spaniards had had for generations. They hated the French occupation. Their priests encouraged

the hatred. People everywhere rose in revolt against Joseph. There was never much of a Spanish army. But there were Spanish fighters in every village. Every lonely French soldier was instantly in danger, not only of death, but of torture. Few parts of the country could be held down unless there was an army on the spot. Sometimes that did not suffice. General Dupont, with 17,000 French soldiers, was surrounded at Baylen and compelled to surrender. Wellesley (now Lord Wellington) marched into Spain, took advantage of the quarrels of the marshals, who were not co-operating, won a victory at Talavera, and occupied Madrid. Joseph was a fugitive.

#### FAILURE IN SPAIN

Napoleon took the matter in hand (1809). He came himself, with still more of the *Grande Armée* and several marshals, into Spain. He led his forces down the main roads into Madrid, and planned that his wings should sweep round and crush the Spanish forces on the flanks. But there were unforeseen circumstances which interfered with this plan. The roads to be used for these operations were worse than in any part of Europe (except Poland) that the French had visited. Five mountain ranges crossed Spain. The inhabitants were not friendly, as the Germans and Italians had been, and had to be browbeaten into providing supplies. Worse still, Napoleon had to go away to deal with the threat of a new war with Austria. His marshals, without his controlling hand, could not work together. They refused to help each other in difficulties; they frequently challenged each other to duels. Most of them had risen from extreme poverty, and were anxious to make as much as possible out of their authority. (Ney and Davout were conspicuous exceptions to this.) Soult pursued a British army under Sir John Moore (the great reorganiser of the British Army),

who had created a diversion on the flank and then hurried to the north-west. Bad weather and bad roads prevented Soult from catching Moore until the English were about to embark at Corunna.<sup>1</sup> There, Moore fought a successful rearguard action : was killed, and achieved immortality in verse. Wellington began, slowly and cautiously, to move out of Portugal. In 1810 Napoleon fetched Masséna from his comfortable command in Rome, where money was to be made from the sale of licences to trade in contravention of the Continental System. Masséna, who was, except perhaps for Davout, the best marshal, forced Wellington to retire. The lines of Torres Vedras, covered by the English fleet, held him up for the winter. The French had to get food in the midst of a hostile population, and to keep up communications where messengers must go in batches. In 1811 Masséna had to retreat again, leaving the initiative to Wellington.

#### WAGRAM AND MARIE LOUISE

In 1809 Austria renewed the war. The reforms of Stadion, and still more the military reorganisation of the Archduke Charles, put new hope into the Government. England offered money and an expedition to Antwerp. There was a chance of a German rising, for Germans were being roused against French tyranny. A bookseller of Nuremberg was executed for publishing an anti-French pamphlet. Hamburg was very hostile to Napoleon, since its trade was being destroyed. The middle classes in Germany found that their little luxuries could not be obtained. Stein had to be dismissed : he was reorganising Prussia too quickly. But his spirit lived on. Napoleon hurried from Spain to meet a serious danger. He found that Murat and Berthier had deployed their armies in such a way that

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Hardy in the *Dynasts* has a good description of this retreat.

concentration was difficult. They quarrelled over precedence : the officers frequently found themselves with two contradictory sets of orders. The Austrians were advancing into Bavaria, helped by the fact that the Tyrolese, angry at the well-meant efforts of Maximilian Joseph to rule them according to Napoleonic methods, had risen under an inn-keeper, Andreas Hofer. Napoleon quickly repaired the situation. Leaving the army of Italy to Masséna, he went himself to Germany. Concentrating his forces quickly, he drove a way through the centre of the Austrians at Eckmühl (which was as much of a triumph for Davout as for him), and advanced to Vienna without serious opposition. He took the city. But the Archduke Charles was on the north bank, waiting for him. Masséna had been defeated in Italy. Armies had to be sent to the Tyrol, to the disaffected quarters of Germany. Napoleon was in a dangerous position, a long way from home, with much of his army scattered. His available forces were collected on the large island of Lobau, in the Danube below Vienna. He tried to storm the strong Austrian positions at Aspern and Essling. After terrific fighting, his pontoon bridges were destroyed by logs of wood floated down the river : he had to evacuate the Austrian bank and return to the island. Europe was excited at his plight. But here he showed his obstinate courage and resource. He sent for help, to the forces in the Tyrol : to Masséna : to Marmont, who was ruling Dalmatia. He worked feverishly, day and night, sending orders for fresh contingents, planning to build better bridges. His enemies made bad use of their time. The English expedition languished in the unhealthy island of Walcheren. Fouché, hearing of this danger, acted alone in Napoleon's absence. He collected forces (calling out the National Guards) gave them to Bernadotte, who had been sent home in disgrace, and sent them to Antwerp. Here Bernadotte stayed,

watching the English force die of fever. Marmont arrived at Lobau : Masséna, though defeated, got there quicker than his conquerors. Suddenly Napoleon, with an infinitely better force, moved again. He turned the defences of Aspern and Essling, and forced the Austrians to meet him at Wagram. This was the greatest battle for centuries : there were nearly 200,000 men on either side. The citizens of Vienna watched the battle from their walls. For some time it hung in the balance. But Napoleon, by means of his artillery and by skilful concentration in the centre, again won a victory. Once more Napoleon had wiped out a check with a triumph. Francis at once sued for peace, and, by the Treaty of Schönbrunn, Austria's boundaries were further reduced. The German risings were put down by German contingents in Napoleon's service. The Tyrolese, abandoned by Francis, went down with a fight. Hofer was made a martyr.

After this defeat, Francis appointed to the Chief Ministry Metternich, a Rhineland count who had served him as ambassador at Paris. Metternich, for the time, abandoned hostility to France. He set to work to conciliate Napoleon. Indeed, he was diverted from anti-French feeling, to some extent, by his jealousy of the Russian advance in the Balkans. Russia in control of the Danubian principalities was about as bad as Napoleon in control of Germany. Thus Metternich was friendly to Napoleon. He went so far as to facilitate a marriage. Napoleon, who had no legitimate son, felt that he was compelled to get a divorce : besides, he wanted an empress from a royal house to grace his new court. Therefore he parted from his old and unfaithful love, Josephine, and married Marie Louise of the Habsburgs. He treated her rather like a favourite kitten.

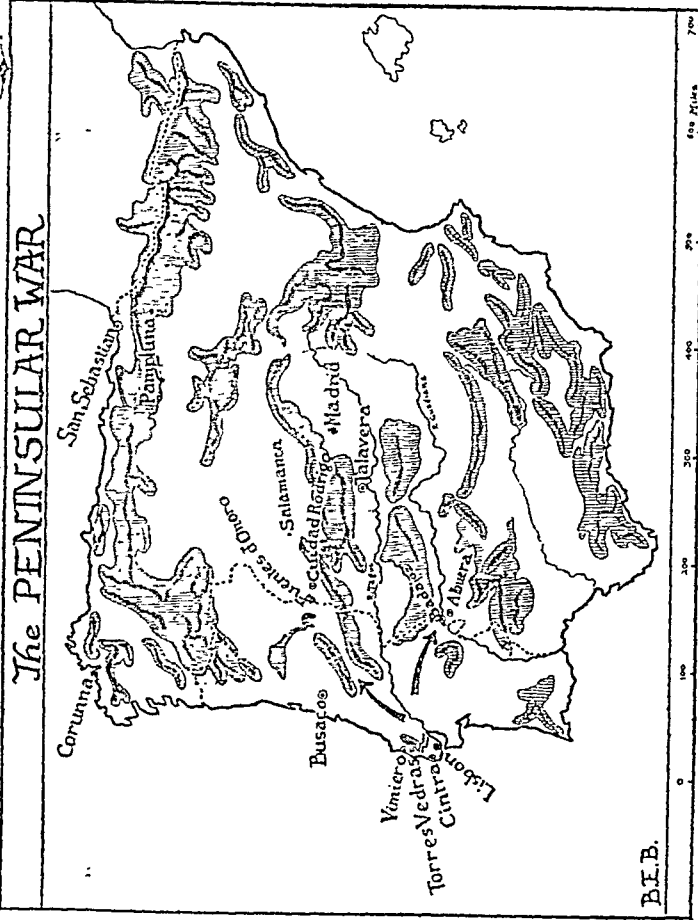
## TURN OF NAPOLEON'S FORTUNES

Wagram brought this double triumph. Yet the year 1810 may be taken as the beginning of a serious decline in Napoleon's fortunes. In that year Alexander started to turn his coat again. His friendship for Napoleon had been part of his liberalism. For some time after 1807 he had, with the assistance of his pro-French, progressive Minister Speransky, tried hard to rule Russia in as enlightened a manner as Napoleon would have done. But Russian conservatism was too strong for him. The serf-owners protested vigorously against the stoppage of their exports to England. In 1810 they gained the Czar's ear. Hereafter he gave his chief confidence to Nesselrode, who intrigued with Talleyrand for Napoleon's overthrow : they wrote to each other under assumed names. Russia abandoned the Continental System. A secret mission was sent to Vienna to win the Austrians away from France ; but for some time it was a failure, since the Austrians wanted Moldavia and Wallachia as their price. Metternich was not to be drawn easily. In the year 1810 Hamburg and Holland had to be added to the French Empire : now some of the most populous parts of Europe were being kept down by sheer force. Davout, the iron man, the incorruptible, was sent to be Governor of Hamburg. In the year 1810 Napoleon failed, for the first time, to balance his budget. Opposition became real in the tame legislative bodies. From this point he may be said to have lost the active support of the middle classes of France. They now found his taxes, his levies, his trading restrictions too big a price to pay for his glory and his order. The nobility was half treacherous already. Only the peasants held firmly to him, for he had guaranteed them their land. But over Germany, Austria, and the other countries which he dominated, men were talking of the day when he

might be overthrown. Prussia was secretly preparing for the day, even if the frightened King would not move. In Spain the people fought a winning battle against the invaders. Fouché, one of Napoleon's ablest servants, was dismissed in 1810. Talleyrand was already in semi-disgrace and semi-disaffection. The new generation of officials was greatly inferior to the old ; more and more Napoleon wanted subordination rather than talent. The Church did not continue to be his friend. Pope Pius VII, a courageous man, objected to the occupation of the Papal States and to the secular domination of the French Church. He was brought as a prisoner to Savona. He would not give way. The priests could no longer be relied on to preach imperial propaganda from the pulpit. Some ecclesiastics remained on Napoleon's side ; later, at Fontainebleau, the Pope was persuaded to make a new concordat. The agreement did not last, and in the *débâcle* the Emperor had the Papal thunder as well as the enemy guns against him. Bernadotte, in Sweden, was persuading his countrymen to forgo their ambitions in Finland, for which they had been fighting the Russians, and to turn their desires towards Denmark, that ally of Napoleon. The English merchants, building up their production with steam and cheap labour of children, were anxious to sell their goods in Europe. They would have no rival. They persuaded the English people that " Boney " was a tyrant, an inhuman monster : they led liberal-minded men to long for his overthrow, even more than they would inevitably have done. The blockade was kept up steadily, relentlessly.

#### FRENCH DRIVEN FROM SPAIN

During the years 1811 and 1812 the Spanish war dragged on. There was always something to stop Napoleon attending to it himself. His son was born, the King of Rome. He had to







reorganise the Government, and lighten the Continental System. His marshals quarrelled. He worked out neat schemes for their strategy. But he never realised the difficulty of communications, the hostility of the Spaniards, the jealousy of the marshals. He sent Suchet, a really able commander, into Spain : but Suchet had to waste his time in Catalonia, where he conciliated the people and endowed hospitals, when he might have defeated Wellington. In Andalusia the ambitious Soult, the Viceroy, was enjoying himself amid the sunny groves and easy-going people : he refused to help his colleagues. Less competent leaders had to deal with Wellington. In 1812, cautiously advancing, the English commander came in touch with Marmont. For some time they moved along parallel lines, watching each other. At Salamanca, Wellington looked through a telescope, saw that the French were badly deployed, ordered a charge, and won a battle in forty minutes. (By the time this battle was fought, Napoleon was in Russia. A messenger, travelling as quickly as he could, took a month and a day to get from Salamanca to Borodino, where Napoleon was about to fight a battle.) In the same year liberal-minded Spaniards gathered together and drafted the Constitution which was later to be known by the year 1812, and stood as a charter of liberties to be fought for by Southern Europeans in search of democratic government. Many generations were to shed their blood before Spain enjoyed anything approaching the good government demanded in 1812.

In 1813 the English pressed the war more vigorously. They had at last a Foreign Minister, Castlereagh (a gloomy, aloof, mistrusted man), who worked relentlessly for the winning of the war. The French armies were unified under poor King Joseph, and advised by Jourdan, who rested on his reputation of revolutionary days. Soult would not obey

orders. In 1813 a badly managed French army was completely defeated at Vittoria. Then Wellington at last deemed it safe not to retire. Joseph, without his guns and baggage, fled. Soult was put in command of the French armies. He could not do more than fight clever rearguard actions. Wellington advanced steadily towards the Pyrenees. He crossed them. In 1814 he pressed Soult on into France, and, just as Napoleon was giving up the game, defeated him at Toulouse. The Spanish war did more almost than anything to defeat Napoleon. In Napoleon's words, it was a "running sore." At the crisis of his career in Central Europe, 200,000 good troops were detained in Spain. The Continental System could not be enforced once the English had landed their goods in the Peninsula. But it would have been better for Napoleon had he left his armies at the Pyrenees. The Spanish rising taught the rest of Europe what a people could do.

#### WAR WITH RUSSIA

But before the Peninsular War came near to its disastrous end the Emperor had gone on his greatest and wildest venture, the conquest of Russia. For some time the two Emperors drifted into hostility. There was the Continental System. Then, Alexander saw with dismay Napoleon's grip tighten on Germany. The annexation of Hamburg seemed like the stretching of a claw across Northern Europe towards Russia. For some time he hesitated to make war on Napoleon, in spite of Talleyrand's encouragement. He was afraid of Metternich. He had his war with Turkey. There, after some early reverses, his generals were making headway. The Turks were handicapped by the Serbian rebellion. The Serbs, inspired by bards and bandits, had long had the idea of rebellion put before them. They were

driven into revolt in 1807 by the lawlessness and tyranny of the Janissaries at Belgrade. The Serb leader was a pig-dealer called Kara George, who had seen service as an Austrian officer. He roused his countrymen by his enthusiasm and maintained their cause by his tactics. The Serbs drove out the Turks and organised a democratic Government of their own, which had the distinction of organising a system of elementary education more than twenty years before England did. In spite of difficulties, the Turks were as stubborn as usual. For some years the young English representative at Constantinople, Stratford Canning, worked hard, with little support from home, to make Russia and Turkey come to terms. At last, in 1812, he succeeded in negotiating the Treaty of Bucharest, by which Russia was extended to the Danube mouth, and the Serbs were abandoned. Russian armies marched back in time to harass Napoleon's retreat.

## MOSCOW

Napoleon could almost certainly have arrested the war if he had wanted. But his ambition got the better of him. His better counsellors were dismissed or unheeded. The peace which the French longed for, in order to enjoy the benefits of his rule, was not to come. An army of half a million, composed largely of men from the subject nations, was collected on the Polish frontier in 1812. Napoleon's personality was magnetic enough to draw all these men from their homes to walk into the endless plains against an enemy with whom they had no real quarrel. Seldom has one man moved so many others so powerfully ! Napoleon crossed the Niemen in the summer, and advanced into Russia. It was a long time before he came into touch with a serious Russian army. Out of Poland, the march became difficult.

Roads were bad, supplies were hard to get. Smolensk offered stubborn resistance : was captured. Napoleon ought to have wintered here. He chose instead to go on, getting out of touch with his subordinate corps, his unwilling Prussian allies on his left, his unwilling Austrian allies on his right. He advanced. He lost men. The Russians retreated. Russian public opinion was all against this retirement : probably Alexander was against it too. It is unlikely that the thing was ever planned. The Russian generals just went back, unknowingly luring Napoleon into a trap. At Borodino the Russians stood firm. Napoleon attacked them heavily, clumsily, in front : he would listen to no schemes of Murat for flank movements. He was not the man of Austerlitz and Friedland : he could no longer work his eighteen hours a day, nor could he plan lightning moves. The French drove the Russians back, but did not destroy them. Moscow was open. Napoleon fulfilled his great ambition of entering it in triumph. But the victory was empty. The city was set on fire. The Russian armies were still in the field. Napoleon might have stood his ground : might have got to St. Petersburg ! might have invaded the warmer, more fruitful south. He chose to retreat.

The retreat began. At first the weather was good. But far more than half of the army had already disappeared, and the morale of the remainder was not good. Napoleon tried to return by a more southerly route : the Russians drove him out of that. He had to return by the ghastly battlefield of Borodino, along the devastated route he had come, into ruined Smolensk. The winter came. The army wilted before it. The Russians, raiding and skirmishing, broke it up still more. At the crossing of the Bérésina, Napoleon had to use his utmost skill to get any troops across at all. After that he left the army to save his throne.

The remainder, miserably starved and tattered, were led back by the unconquerable Ney until at last a tiny band (20,000) crossed the Niemen. The great army had been wiped out.

## THE WAR OF LIBERATION

Alexander decided not to stop at the Niemen. He resolved to liberate Europe. The Prussian people were willing to rise, though their King hesitated. In the winter the King's hand was forced, and by the Treaty of Kalisch Russia and Prussia agreed to fight together against Napoleon. England offered money. Against this invasion Napoleon at first had no army except the garrison in Germany. By superhuman efforts he raised a new army in France. These men were, for the most part, Frenchmen who could better be trusted than the subject levies left in Russia. Yet many were raw, unfit, untrained. He took the field : and at once committed a serious error by holding Saxony. This was too far from his base : it made his communications too long. He made the mistake that Mack had made in 1805.

He won victories at Lutzen and Bautzen : but the Russian and Prussian armies reappeared. The rest of Germany was disaffected. Temporarily exhausted, Napoleon made an armistice at Plasnitz. This helped in his downfall. His enemies made better use of it than he did, and they were swelled by the addition of Sweden and Austria. Crown Prince Charles John (Bernadotte) promised to help the Allies against Napoleon if his title was recognised. Metternich thought it time to play a hand. He was cautious, for he didn't love the Russian army much more than the French. But Napoleon would not consider his reasonable terms ; so Austria, by the Treaty of Reichenbach, joined the other Powers opposed to Napoleon. The campaign began again. Moreau and Bernadotte advised the Allies,

Pr

annoying the fierce Blücher (Marshal Forwards) by suggesting that they should only give battle when they were opposed to a marshal. With difficulty the allied armies worked to a plan. The eager old Blücher, the slow Schwarzenburg, the argumentative Alexander continued somehow to combine. Napoleon sent armies out to attack them. But his expedition to Silesia was defeated at the Katzbach, his expedition to Berlin defeated at Grossbeeren. The Allies closed in on him at Dresden. He fought back at them with something of his old energy and brilliance. A ravine to the south of the city hindered communication between the enemy wings. Taking full advantage of this, he attacked them and drove them off. But this victory was not followed up by devastating pursuit like his early triumphs. An expedition did indeed go south after the retreating Austrians : but it was caught by the natural ambush of the Erz Gebirge mountain, and annihilated at Kulm. Napoleon gradually realised that his Dresden position was untenable. He retreated to Leipzig. There the Allied armies slowly closed in on him. Day by day, in overwhelming numbers (they had 300,000, he less than 200,000) they came nearer. It was called "the Battle of the Nations." The Allied army really did represent a cosmopolitan crusade against Napoleon. The English contributed an up-to-date battery of rocket-guns, which was guarded by Cossacks from Asia, armed with bows and arrows. The Allies were divided, and the old Napoleon might have defeated them in turn. But the tired, harassed Napoleon of 1813 decided to retreat. Just in time, since there was only one bridge available over a river to the west of the town. Thousands were lost in the evacuation : thousands more on the return to the Rhine. In two years Napoleon had lost two armies. The army that went in Germany was a more serious loss than the army that went in Russia. The Allies now commanded Germany,

except Hamburg, where the indomitable Davout obstinately and uselessly held out.

At Frankfort, Napoleon was offered the old boundaries of France. Stupidly he refused : he hoped to raise France in a *levée en masse*, as the revolutionaries had done in 1793. But now France was not fighting for liberty. She was paying again the demands of an autocrat who, more and more, was struggling for Napoleon and not for France. Conscripts came in, and new armies were fashioned. But they had no cause for enthusiasm. Many of them did not know how to handle guns. They had no great cause to inspire them and take the place of technique. The eagerness was now on the other side. Still, in 1814 Napoleon worked wonders. He took his little army here and there, attacking first one enemy and then another. But, if he won victories, there were always more enemies to appear. At Châtillon the Allies made a last offer of terms : again he refused. The Powers then made the Treaty of Chaumont, by which they bound themselves to expel Napoleon : they also made arrangements for the disposal of his territory, of which more will be said later. Napoleon continued desperately to fight. He conducted a campaign which some consider his most brilliant. He used "interior lines" to attack a larger enemy, showing his old skill and fire. He fell on Blücher's Prussian army in detail, and knocked it to pieces. The cautious Schwartzenburg, who had marched into France by Switzerland, found this an excuse to retreat. But Blücher was not daunted. He collected troops again and advanced by himself. Napoleon attacked him again, but this time was held off at Laon. At this crisis Napoleon appealed to Marshal Augereau, to the south-east, to come to rescue him : but this trimming adventurer, seeing the way the wind was blowing, refused to move. As a last gamble, Napoleon moved off to attack the Allied communications.



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Some of the Allies were frightened. Blücher was not : he made them march boldly on Paris. The capital lay open. Napoleon marched back to save it. But now the army would stand it no more. The marshals demanded his abdication. Napoleon, in the stormy interview, said, " The army will obey me ! " A marshal replied : " The army will obey its generals." Napoleon gave it up. He sent a message to Alexander offering to abdicate in favour of his son. Alexander offered to consider the message. But that night, Marshal Marmont, Napoleon's oldest comrade, led his army corps over to the enemy. The game was lost. The Allies demanded Napoleon's unconditional abdication. He had no choice but to give it. The Allied armies marched triumphantly into Paris. Napoleon was sent to Elba. Davout had to give up Hamburg. The French people cheered the white ensign of the Bourbons again.

## CHAPTER XV

### VIENNA AND WATERLOO

THE ALLIES WERE MASTERS OF PARIS. Their leading figure, the man who had been most insistent in his desire to liberate Europe from Napoleon, was Alexander. He was still liberal, though perhaps not so liberal as he had been. He was quite determined that France should not be driven back to the *ancien régime*. Whatever new Government was to be established in place of the defeated Emperor, it should not be an oppressive one. Alexander was pleased at the applause of the Paris citizens. He knew they looked on him as a deliverer, and a deliverer he meant to be. He came to settle the peace on liberal lines, as President Wilson did in 1918. Various schemes were put forward for the settlement of France. Napoleon had abdicated in favour of his young son, the King of Rome. Some suggested Bernadotte, the Crown Prince of Sweden. But one man had made up his mind. Talleyrand, that grotesque figure with spindle legs and twisted ankles, walking "like a bad skater" in a monstrous coat and a frizzy wig of natural hair, wearing his impassive countenance like "a rapid stream, frozen over smoothly and transparently enough to show the current without discovering his bottom," wanted the Bourbons back. A year or so back he had been seen (as Prince of Beneventum) to hobble up to Napoleon at a public function, preceded by a page who set down a cushion on which

Talleyrand knelt to embrace the Emperor's knees. Now he was full of reproaches against Napoleon ; he similarly hated Jacobins and all such past associates. He had been in Alexander's confidence, secretly, for some time. At this crisis he played a big part in persuading him to restore the Bourbons. So that eventually the fat, gouty, good-natured Louis XVIII, brother of the executed Louis XVI (the Dauphin, who had died in prison in 1795, was assumed to have used up the number seventeen) came to France to be king. He received Talleyrand, his king-maker, cheerfully and patronisingly, graciously forgiving him for not having served him all along. Louis entered Paris, amid cheers from the people who wanted peace. Alexander at once made him grant a charter, which was to give constitutional government to France. Louis agreed without much hesitation : like Charles II of England on a similar occasion, he was not anxious to "go on his travels again." The French elected a chamber. But the King's brother, and such of the old nobles as had survived, crowded back to the capital with the new king. Young nobles were appointed to high military rank about the household, while the survivors of the *Grande Armée* were put on half pay. The nobles' wives came back and were rude to the wives of the marshals, who had mostly accepted some sort of office under the new king. (Davout was not one of these.) Napoleon was sent to Elba, a little Mediterranean island which was contemptuously given to him for his realm. Louis XVIII showed no desire to reverse the more important changes made by the Revolution and confirmed by the Empire. But his courtiers hinted that they would like their privileges back, and their behaviour generally, if not actually dangerous, was so tactless and provocative that Frenchmen soon became alarmed. The merchants, glad to be quit of the blockade and anxious for peace, were ready to serve the Bourbon if

they were not disturbed. But the masses, especially the peasants who could not forget that their land had been ensured to them by Napoleon, and that their wealth had increased in spite of taxes and conscription and blockade, soon learnt to hate the restored monarchy.

#### TREATIES OF PARIS AND VIENNA

The Allied rulers made the Treaty of Paris with Louis XVIII. By this, France was to be restored to her boundaries of 1792 with the addition of Avignon, a Papal State which had previously been an enclave in the midst of French territory. It is noteworthy that the victors of 1814 recognised that their quarrel had been with Napoleon rather than with France. They showed no anxiety to be revenged on France for having been defeated, and in this respect they were more generous than the victors of 1918-19, who notoriously treated Germany as a guilty nation to be punished even when the rulers who had made war had been turned out. Considering that her debt was much smaller than England's, that she lost no territory, that she had not been devastated by the war as much as most of Europe, France was leniently treated.

Having settled the question of France, the rulers of Europe met at the Congress of Vienna to settle the disorganised Continent. From November 1814 until the middle of 1815 it was remaking the map of Europe. The intention of the rulers who met there was not to make something new. They wanted, as far as possible, to put the clock back to 1792. The former, "legitimate" rulers were brought back, if possible. Countries were treated like so much personal property, which had been stolen from the kings, their owners, and now must be returned. The diplomatists of Vienna did not credit the people of Europe with having

wills of their own. In that they were for the most part right. Most people wanted peace at any price, and were quite ready to cheer the old kings in. But the overthrow of Napoleon had been caused, primarily, by the uprising of the spirit of nationalism. The more active thinkers, trained by Napoleon himself to use modern civilisation and live under reasonable law and institutions, had urged on the masses to rise against the Emperor when he became oppressive. With the fall of Napoleon, their immediate object had been achieved : the masses were content to be rid of war and French rulers. But this spirit, once invoked, could not be set for ever aside. Attempts were made on all sides to abolish Napoleonic improvements, to restore the evils which the Revolution and Napoleon had done away with. These returning tyrannies roused the active few, who in turn roused the masses : and soon the forces of nationalism and liberalism—desires for self-government and reformed institutions—were at war with the rulers whom they had helped to victory against Napoleon. Thus the rulers of 1815, by their disregard of popular will, caused bitterness and later revolt. Since the preaching of Rousseau, it has not been possible to forget the popular will for long. These statesmen who forgot it in 1815 were rudely reminded many times before they died.

“ LE CONGRÈS DANSE, MAIS NE MARCHE PAS ”

Vienna was full of gay people. Kings, nobles, politicians, soldiers and lackeys from all over Europe came there. Francis II in his hour of triumph saw to it that they were well entertained, though he had little money. “ Congress dances ! ” Everyone was eager to enjoy life, to celebrate the downfall of Napoleon. The Chief Minister of Francis, Metternich, who was so kind, hospitable and sociable on

the surface, so careful and calculating underneath, hoped that in the midst of this revelry he would be able to arrange the affairs of Europe to suit the needs of Austria. The Austrian Empire was an artificial system imposed on the backs of Austrians and all the other people in its borders. (In the nineteenth century Austrian Army Orders had to be issued in nine languages.) Therefore Metternich had to bolster up all the other artificial despotisms so that the failure of one of them should not imperil the most artificial of them all. He did not always have his own way. In particular the man he most feared, the charming Alexander of Russia, who uttered such distressingly liberal sentiments and even put liberal ideas into practice (a good way from home), was hard to control, even through dinners and dances. Alexander had a big army ready to march : an army was a luxury Austria could ill afford. Alexander had to be controlled. The weak King of Prussia, Frederick William III, who, now that his courageous queen was dead, listened to the words of Alexander with increasing respect, had to be checked too. Then there was his ultra-patriotic Minister, Stein, who had returned from the retirement Napoleon had forced him into : Stein, with his uncomfortable pan-German ideals which would have given Austria awkward neighbours. There were the rulers of the German States, who wanted some kind of organisation. This was all very dangerous : the large rulers had to be set against the small ones. To hold his own against Russia and Prussia, Metternich had to work closely with the English representatives. These were, first, Castlereagh, the somewhat aloof and starchy Irishman who was anxious not to become too much involved in European affairs : and, when Castlereagh had to go to explain his behaviour to Parliament (incredible thing !) the Duke of Wellington, tall and stately, looking rather like a Roman general in modern uniform, who was

so popular that crowds cheered him when he appeared in public, while his aide-de-camp, overcome with emotion, seized his hand and kissed it. But the English representative was not by himself assistance enough against Alexander and Frederick William : so that Metternich had to admit to his councils the crafty hobbling Talleyrand, representative of the Bourbon King of France, who came as a suppliant and emerged as an equal. The representatives of Austria, France and England combined at a critical moment which will be shown later. By this means Talleyrand made his importance and that of his country felt.

It must be remembered that, whereas the conference talked publicly and pompously, the great statesmen talked privately at dinners and in closets : and behind closed doors a small body of men, minor agents, led by Metternich's tireless secretary Gentz, drafted the boundaries, worded the statutes, and filled in the body of the Treaty.

#### SOUTHERN AND WESTERN EUROPE

It will be as well to take the arrangements made by the Congress in geographical order, though that does not correspond to the chronological order of their decisions. To begin with, the Congress tried to guard against further French irruptions by the establishment of a ring of strong States on her eastern borders. The rulers at Vienna believed in the Balance of Power. This theory was an old method of preserving peace by equilibrium : seeing that a strong Power was matched by another strong Power, or group of Powers. Thus the Austrian Netherlands were given to Holland and the ruler styled the King of the Netherlands. The Rhine lands were given to Prussia. Switzerland was encouraged to become more united, and its neutrality guaranteed by the Powers. The King of Sardinia returned to rule a large State,

including Savoy and Nice. So far, so good. The Congress, while believing in the Balance of Power, had as corollaries the doctrines of the *status quo* (by which the old ruler should, as far as possible, rule), and the *quid pro quo* (by which, where the above was inconvenient, the old ruler should get something in return for what he gave up). In the case of the Netherlands there was a neat working of the *quid pro quo*. England had taken the Cape and Ceylon from Holland during the wars : her Government, not wanting to give them up, saw to it that the House of Orange received Belgium in exchange. The Austrian Emperor gave up Belgium, which he didn't want, and received Venetia. That rounded off his Italian dominion, which of course included Lombardy. Elsewhere, for the most part, Italian rulers were restored. The Pope received the Papal States. Joachim of Naples (Murat) had made an agreement with the Allies to desert Napoleon in return for recognition of his rule : for the moment they could see no convenient way of breaking this pledge, and thus Ferdinand the Bourbon was still confined to Sicily, though the other Bourbon Ferdinand returned to oppress Spain. Parma was given to the Empress Marie Louise (who had completely abandoned her husband).

#### GERMANY AND POLAND

Then, Germany. The settlement of this caused a great deal of argument. Some rulers petitioned Francis to resume the title of Holy Roman Emperor, but he, more anxious to develop his Italian possessions, refused this commitment. Indeed Austria, wishing to avoid distant entanglements, made no bid for the Rhine lands, which accordingly went to Prussia. In this way Prussia rose to be a sort of inevitable protector of Germany against the French. Prussia was not satisfied with this gain. Her King wanted Saxony. It was



generally agreed that the King of Saxony had stood by Napoleon for too long : he had not come into the Coalition in time to bargain, like the Kings of Bavaria and Württemberg. Alexander backed the Prussian claim to Saxony, because in return Prussia would support Alexander's claim to all Poland. This caused a crisis, since Metternich resisted these exorbitant demands. He was backed by Castlereagh. To get further support, he admitted Talleyrand to the status of an equal. The three countries—Austria, France, England—formed an alliance to resist Russia and Prussia by any means necessary. As England had the money, this was a serious threat. There was a danger of war : long haggling and heated words were necessary before a compromise was reached. Eventually Prussia was given two-fifths of Saxony. Germany was finally formed into a Confederation, to be controlled by a Diet, which left most of the States virtually independent. Indeed there was a clause in the Treaty which guaranteed the right of a State to choose its own institutions : though this did not for long prove to be a safeguard against the despotism of Austria and Prussia. The number of States was reduced from over three hundred to thirty-nine. As the Church lands were not restored, there was plenty of extra territory to go round, so that no one had much cause for dissatisfaction. Poland was divided. The greater share went to Alexander : he, still a little liberal, gave it a Constitution and a separate system of administration from Russia. The town of Cracow, about which there was no agreement in the slicing-up, was finally constituted as an independent republic, under the worthless guarantee of the Powers. Norway was taken from Denmark, which had been too faithful to Napoleon, and given to Sweden, in return for which Crown Prince Charles John, the guiding spirit of Sweden, definitely gave up Finland to Russia. Nothing was settled about Turkey :

the Serbs still struggled for freedom, Alexander still complained, and kept on the Turkish frontier a big army which caused less anxiety to the Sultan than it did to Metternich. The Congress thought that the slave trade (abolished as far as England was concerned at the instance of Fox in 1807) ought to be stopped. It is interesting to record that England was not repaid any of the loans she had advanced to her allies. But the English admitted that, if they had spent money, the others had spent blood : and did not press their debtors.

#### NAPOLÉON RETURNS

The last decisions of the Congress were somewhat hurried: for news had come that Napoleon had left Elba. At first the fallen Emperor threw himself with great zest into the Government of his little State. He reorganised it, gave it institutions, introduced schools and hospitals, overspent his money. Having done in a few months everything that wanted doing, he was idle. He brooded. Visitors to the island found him, a short, stout figure, looking gloomy, asking questions about the Duke of Wellington. Suddenly he made up his mind to return. He prophesied that he would reach Paris without firing a shot : and he was right. He landed at Fréjus at the beginning of March (1815). The Bourbons and their hangers-on were thrown into a state of indescribable confusion and panic. The bright young noble officers of the household, who had flaunted their uniforms and insulted the veterans, ran away to frontiers like scared rabbits. The marshals were in a difficult position. They, more than anyone, knew the dangers of another war. They had just made one difficult change of allegiance : now they disliked the necessity to make another, though all their instincts were in favour of Napoleon. Marmont, his old friend and betrayer, went away with the

scampering aristocracy. Masséna, cunning old plunderer, announced (probably rightly) that his health would prevent his taking an active part in politics. Davout joined Napoleon with a clear conscience : he had never fawned on the Bourbons. Soult hesitated, and joined. Berthier decided not to : then, overcome by remorse, he threw himself out of a window and was killed. Napoleon could have found good use for the ugly little man. Ney set out from Paris " to bring back Napoleon in an iron cage." But he found that the old soldiers were everywhere going to join the Emperor ; that the peasants were cheering for the man who had given them their land ; that town councils got ready to welcome him ; that the minor Bourbons and aristocrats who tried to hold their commands for the white ensign were turned out. Louis XVIII ran away as fast as his gout would allow him. The merchants shrugged their shoulders and were rather annoyed that this new excursion might interfere with their profit-making : yet, they reflected, the Bourbons could not be trusted. . . . Ney put away his iron cage and cheered Napoleon too (though for a time Napoleon would not trust him). Everywhere Napoleon was acclaimed. He went to Paris in triumph. The Empire was alive again.

It was a chastened Napoleon. He knew that he would have to meet the anger and the armies of Europe. He could not afford to have trouble at home. He met the Chamber and promised to rule constitutionally. (He declared later at St. Helena that he had intended to revert to autocracy when he could.) He found them not too compliant : they argued with him, and were hard to conciliate. Carnot and Fouché were given the chief posts in the Ministry : no shrinking from distinguished subordinates now. The Vendéans threatened trouble : badly needed troops had to be sent to watch them. Davout became Minister of War (which, unfortunately for Napoleon, kept him in Paris) : Soult was

chief of staff (but not a Berthier). Ney, after being ignored until the army was on the march, was suddenly restored to favour and given the second command. . . . Napoleon had to face a hostile world. But he had some of his best lieutenants. He had better troops than in 1814, for his veterans had returned from fortresses and captivity. Above all, he had his own quick brain. Still a young man of forty, he planned all the moves in his last great adventure himself. He had 200,000 men under arms. Some were sent to disaffected regions, some to watch the Austrians and Russians on the Rhine. Rather less than 100,000 went with him to the Netherlands, where, he knew, the Duke of Wellington and Blücher were collecting English, Dutch, Belgian and German troops. "I go to cross swords with Wellington," said the Emperor, as he got into his carriage to leave Paris.

#### THE HUNDRED DAYS

And the Allies. The rulers at Vienna suddenly stopped their quarrels as the ominous news came through. They looked at each other, a little frightened : then resolved to see the thing through. The outstanding questions in dispute were settled quickly, and the great figures went from Vienna leaving the clerks to complete the drafting of the Treaty. England offered to foot the bill, the Rothschilds had ready money to lend. Hundreds of thousands of troops were set slowly marching towards France. King Joachim of Naples suddenly turned his coat, declared himself for Napoleon, and led an army north to attack the Austrians. He did his master only harm. His army consisted of Neapolitans, who were "ready to run, whatever the colour of their coat." They ran, and Joachim Murat fled, a penniless outcast, to France. Later he tried to rouse his kingdom again, but was captured and shot : a miserable end to a fine, if flamboyant, man. Not troubled by this diversion (which indeed

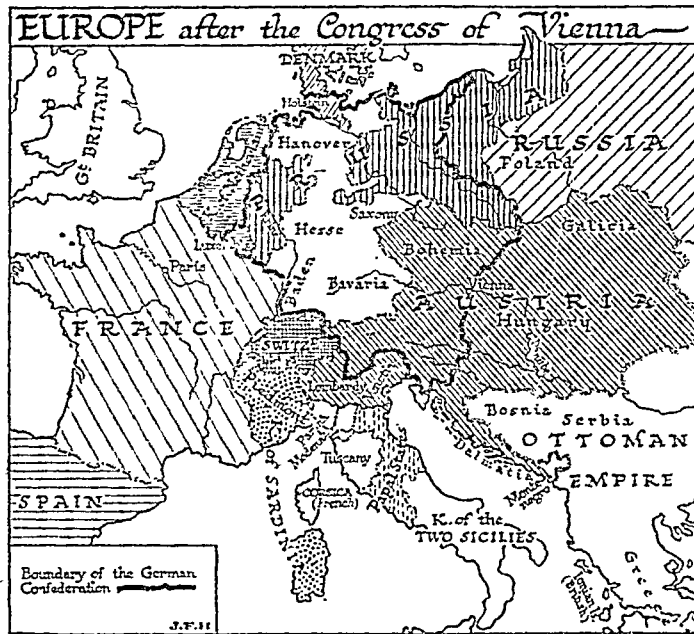
gave them an excuse for restoring the egregious Ferdinand to his full misrule), the Allies moved toward France. The cream of English society was at Brussels, being gay with a suspicion of neurotic excitement underneath. Napoleon approached more quickly than they had imagined : he almost came near enough to interrupt the Duchess of Richmond's ball. He was in Belgium before the English and Prussian armies had combined. He drove at the Prussians first. Sending Ney to hold the English in check, he attacked Blücher at Ligny. He won, but the Prussians were numerous and stubborn : charge after charge had to be made before they would leave the field. Blücher was knocked off his horse and trodden on. Here came a tragic blunder. A strong corps under D'Erlon had contradictory orders from Napoleon and Ney, countermarched all day, and did nothing. It might have routed the Prussians at Ligny, it might have defeated Wellington at Quatre Bras. But Ney, who was not a genius, lost his temper and the campaign : he did not fall in with Napoleon's plan. Wellington had rather the better of the engagement at Quatre Bras : hearing that Blücher had been defeated, he retreated in good order to Waterloo near Brussels. Napoleon wasted time before pursuing. Then he sent Grouchy (who had just been appointed marshal, and was one of the few nobles to rise to that honour) to follow Blücher : for Blücher, he thought, was running away. On June 15 he led the rest of his army to meet Wellington at Waterloo. He had rather more men than his enemy. Wellington's was a mixed force. Most of his Peninsular veterans had gone to filibuster at New Orleans—though he had his famous Light Division. His few English troops, highly professionalised, and more skilled in musketry than any Napoleon had met, had to give strength to a motley force. They had to hold out until help came : for Blücher, instead of running away, was

turning to make the most famous flank march in history. Wellington occupied the slopes of Mont St. Jean, and various farms and houses. Throughout the early part of the day the French attacked and attacked : always they were held back by the deadly fire of the English infantry. Then it was seen that troops were coming from the east. "Grouchy!" cried Napoleon. But it was not Grouchy : it was Blücher, late indeed, but yet in time. Hurriedly Napoleon had to form a new right wing to defend the village of Plancenoît, on which his right wing rested. Gallantly the French held out there, waiting for the English to be driven back. But the charge in the centre failed. At last the Imperial Guard was called out : the last great onslaught was made. But the weakened guards could not break down the English resistance, and were themselves driven back. The English squares held off the French cavalry. Then the line, with converging fires, beat the column. Then Plancenoît fell to the Prussians, who had been arriving in greater numbers for some hours. The French fled, and were pursued fiercely. Wellington met the grim old Blücher : the two shook hands over their work. Napoleon escaped to Paris. It was at once clear that he would have to abdicate again. Blücher offered a reward for his capture, and announced that he would shoot him at once if he got him. Napoleon reached the coast, and surrendered to the captain of the English *Bellerophon*. He asked to be taken to America, but he was taken to the lonely island of St. Helena instead. Davout, who had again been out of the way at Paris, told the Allies sharply that, unless a complete amnesty was granted to those who had served Napoleon during the Hundred Days, he would go across the Loire with 150,000 men and continue the war. They agreed, and Davout surrendered Paris. Louis XVIII was acclaimed in time to prevent Blücher from sacking the city. In spite of the amnesty, the Bourbon

Government tried and shot Ney. Apart from this one colossal exhibition of spite, Louis XVIII was careful. The return had been an awful warning. The French, beaten though they might be, short of money and men (there were villages where no one could find a young man left over from the conscription) would not stand the least suspicion of the *ancien régime* again. The old gang had come back : but they had to be careful.

#### FINAL SETTLEMENT

The Allied rulers came to Paris again, and made a new Treaty. France was to pay an indemnity, and her territory was to be occupied by an Allied force under Wellington. The four Great Powers had made a Quadruple Alliance, to prevent France from disturbing the peace again. It was suggested by Castlereagh that the Congress should meet periodically to review the state of Europe : the monarchs agreed. Alexander was so carried away by the idea of concerted action that he suggested the establishment of a Holy Alliance. The monarchs were brothers, ruling different branches of God's realm, and they must be joined together in sacred unity. All the rulers of Europe joined except the Pope (who was not put at the head of it), the King of England (who was insane) and the Sultan of Turkey (who wasn't asked). The English Government thought it was fantastic, and kept out. The Austrian Government thought it was fantastic, and joined. Metternich, with the Quadruple Alliance in his pocket, could afford to let Alexander romance. So at last the monarchs went home, the peoples settled down to peace : the merchants set to work to try to copy the new English factory processes. The men of liberal minds tried to hope that the restored rulers would remember a few of Napoleon's lessons. The French peasants kept their land







## APPENDIX

### DATES OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS

- 1713 Treaty of Utrecht.
- 1718 Battle of Cape Passaro.  
Death of Charles XII.  
Treaty of Passarowitz.
- 1721 Treaty of Nystadt.
- 1723 Death of Orleans and Dubois.
- 1725 Ripperdà's Marriage Project.  
Death of Peter the Great.
- 1729 Treaty of Seville.
- 1731 Treaty of Vienna.
- 1733 First Family Compact.  
Opening of Polish Succession War.
- 1735 Preliminaries of Vienna.
- 1736- } Turkish War.  
1739 }
- 1740 Deaths of Frederick William I, Charles VI, and  
Anne.  
Frederick II invades Silesia.
- 1742 Fall of Walpole.  
Battle of Campo Santo.  
Treaty of Dresden.
- 1743 Peace of Abo.
- 1744 Frederick II invades Bohemia.
- 1745 Battle of Fontenoy.  
Treaty of Berlin.

- 1748 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.
- 1756 Treaty of Westminster.  
Alliance of Versailles.  
Frederick II invades Saxony.
- 1757 Battles of Kolin, Hastenbeck, Rossbach, Leuthen.
- 1758- } Choiscul's Ministry.  
1770 }
- 1759 Capture of Quebec.  
Battle of Kunersdorf.
- 1760 Battles of Wandewash, Leignitz, Torgau.  
Accession of George III.
- 1761 Third Family Compact.
- 1762 Death of Elizabeth.
- 1763 Treaty of Hubertusberg.  
Treaty of Paris.  
Death of Augustus III.
- 1772 First Partition of Poland.
- 1773 Accession of Gustavus III.
- 1774 Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji.
- 1775 Outbreak of American Rebellion.
- 1777 Battle of Saratoga.
- 1777- } War of Bavarian Succession.  
1778 }
- 1780 Secret Alliance between Joseph II and Catherine II
- 1783 Treaty of Versailles.
- 1785 Fürstenbund.
- 1786 Death of Frederick II.  
Triple Alliance.
- 1787 Russia makes war on Turkey.
- 1789 Outbreak of French Revolution.
- 1790 Convention of Reichenbach.  
Treaty of Verela.

- 1792 Treaty of Jassy.  
*July 25* : Brunswick Manifesto.  
*August 10* : Overthrow of Monarchy.  
*September 20* : Battle of Valmy.  
*September 21* : Meeting of Convention.
- 1793 Second Partition of Poland.  
*January 21* : Execution of Louis XVI.  
*March 18* : Battle of Neerwinden.  
*June 1* : Overthrow of Gironde.  
*October 15* : Battle of Wattignies.
- 1794 *April 5* : Execution of Danton.  
*June 26* : Battle of Fleurus.  
*July 27* : Thermidor.
- 1795 Third Partition of Poland.  
*April 5* : Treaty of Basel.  
*October 5* : Rising of Vendémiaire.  
*November* : Inauguration of the Directory.
- 1797 *January* : Battle of Rivoli.  
*September* : Coup of Fructidor.  
*October* : Treaty of Campo Formio.
- 1798 *August* : Battle of the Nile.
- 1799 *August* : Battle of Novi.  
*November* : Battle of Zurich.  
*November* : Coup of Brumaire.
- 1800 *June* : Battle of Marengo.  
*December* : Battle of Hohenlinden.
- 1801 *February* : Treaty of Lunéville.
- 1802 *March* : Treaty of Amiens.
- 1805 Formation of Third Coalition.  
*October* : Battle of Trafalgar.  
*October* : Battle of Ulm.  
*December* : Battle of Austerlitz.  
*December* : Treaty of Pressburg.
- 1806 *October* : Battles of Jena and Auerstadt.  
*November* : Berlin Decrees.

- 1807 *June* : Battle of Friedland.  
*July* : Treaty of Tilsit.  
*October* : French troops enter Spain.  
*October* : English troops enter Portugal.
- 1808 *July* : Capitulation of Baylen.
- 1809 *July* : Battle of Wagram.
- 1810 *September* : Defence of Torres Vedras.
- 1812 *July* : Invasion of Russia.  
*October* : Evacuation of Moscow.
- 1813 *June* : Battle of Vittoria.  
*October* : Battle of Leipzig.
- 1814 *March* : Treaty of Chaumont.  
*April* : Abdication of Napoleon.  
*May* : Treaty of Paris.  
*September* : Beginning of Congress of Vienna.
- 1815 *March* : Landing of Napoleon.  
*March* : Quadruple Alliance.  
*June* : Final Act of Congress of Vienna.  
*June* : Battle of Waterloo.  
*November* : Second Treaty of Paris.

## PRINCIPAL WRITERS

- Newton (died 1727).  
 Locke (died 1704).  
 Voltaire (1694-1778).  
 Montesquieu : *Esprit des Lois* (1748).  
 Rousseau : *Contrat Social* (1761).  
 Adam Smith : *Wealth of Nations* (1776).  
 The *Encyclopædia* (1751-80).  
 Declaration of Independence (1776).

PRINCIPAL RULERS REFERRED TO

<i>England</i>	George I (1714-27).
<i>France</i>	Louis XV (1715-74). Louis XVI (1774-92).
<i>Spain</i>	Philip V (1700-46). Ferdinand VI (1746-59). Charles III (1759-88).
<i>Prussia</i>	Frederick William I (1713-40). Frederick II (1740-86).
<i>The Empire</i>	Charles VI (1711-40). Francis I (1740-65). Joseph II (1765-90). [Maria Theresa co-Regent 1740-80.] Leopold II (1790-92).
<i>Russia</i>	Anne (1730-40). Elizabeth (1741-62). Catherine II (1763-95).
<i>Sweden</i>	Gustavus III (1773-92).
<i>Portugal</i>	Ministry of Pombal (1750-77).

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

- 1789 *May 5* : Meeting of States-General.  
*June 20* : Tennis-Court Oath.  
*July 14* : Capture of Bastille.  
*August 4* : Abolition of Feudal Rights.  
*October 5* : March to Versailles.
- 1791 *April 2* : Death of Mirabeau.  
*June 20* : Flight to Varennes.  
*July 17* : Champ de Mars.  
*October 1* : Meeting of Legislative Assembly.
- 1792 *April 20* : Declaration of war.

## SUBSIDIARY STATES

Cisalpine Republic (1797).

Kingdom of Italy (1805).

Parthenopean Republic (1799).

Kingdom of Naples : Joseph I (1806).

Joachim I (1808).

Kingdom of Spain : Joseph I (1808).

Batavian Republic (1794).

Kingdom of Holland : Louis I (1806).

[Holland annexed to French Empire (1810).]

Kingdom of Westphalia : Jerome (1807).

Grand Duchy of Warsaw (1807).

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